NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES
3 3433 08235915 3

AN
(Masson J. M

MEMOIRS

OF

JOHN M. MASON, D.D., S.T.P.

WITH

PORTIONS OF HIS CORRESPONDENCE.

BY

JACOB VAN VECHTEN.

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

NEW YORK:
ROBERT CARTER AND BROTHERS,
285 BROADWAY.
1856.

146,329

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1856, by
ROBERT CARTER AND BROTHERS,
In the Clerk's office of the District Court of the United States, for the Southern District of New York.

EDWARD O. JENKINS,
PRINTER AND STEREOTYPER,
26 Frankfort St., N. Y.

TO THE

REV. JOHN KNOX, D.D.,

SENIOR PASTOR OF THE COLLEGIATE DUTCH CHURCH IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK,

WITHOUT WHOSE PERSUASION

THIS WORK WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN UNDERTAKEN,

WITHOUT WHOSE AID IT COULD NOT HAVE BEEN ACCOMPLISHED,

AND

WHOSE SYMPATHIES

HARMONIZE SO BEAUTIFULLY WITH THE CHARACTER HERE PRESENTED,

These Pages are affectionately Inscribed,

BY HIS

FRIEND AND BROTHER,

THE COMPILER.

DUP.EXCH. 25 AUG 1900
BROOKLYN COLL. PHAR.

PREFACE.

Release from a pastoral charge is the circumstance, which, more than any other, has thrown the preparation of these memoirs into present hands. When first invited to the task, the compiler shrunk from it for many reasons; and especially, because he was not aware of the amount of materials, which, with some pains, might be collected. He is now happy to say, that enough has been found to construct a much more voluminous work than was anticipated. Almost every step of inquiry increased both the bulk and the value of our discoveries. This gave rise to another difficulty—that of making a judicious selection. Our object has been brevity. Adherence to this principle has sometimes compelled us to relinquish topics which we would gladly have pursued much further. Such a plan will, perhaps, not be forgiven by those persons who could not be satisfied without the fullest detail; but we felt a greater dread of an opposite class. It will, however, we trust, be a satisfaction to all, that in most cases, the subject has been left to speak for himself, so as to preclude every suspicion of being seen through a colouring medium. We are deceived, if, upon the nearer view here given, many readers do not find some traits of character which they may not have seen at a distance, and which will not diminish either their admiration or esteem. Very conscious that the portrait has not received all those fine and finishing touches of which it is susceptible, and that it has not been hung in the best frame, or in the best light; we yet feel quite contented, if we have enabled practised eyes properly to distinguish between the excellence of the original and the imperfect production of the artist.

As might be expected, Dr. Mason's correspondence generally sprung out of passing events, or out of the feelings awakened by such events; and was often interwoven with public transactions in which he himself took a part. There could be but little hesitation, therefore, in adopting the chronological order of arrangement. A portion of it might have admitted, or even demanded, a different course; but the above consideration was thought of sufficient weight to control the whole. It is also proper to state, that some of the letters have been abridged, and that the signature has often been omitted.

Many anecdotes which are afloat in the community, we have not felt warranted to insert. Though a mind so active, and a wit so ready, as Dr. Mason's, cannot have failed to utter a thousand memorable things, yet, as they were not recorded at the time, they have now become too vague and uncertain for our purpose. The few which are mentioned in these pages, are derived from direct sources, and come well authenticated.

We add but this remark, that it has not been thought necessary to review any part of his published works. These, though they exhibit but a small portion of his labours, invite the closest scrutiny ; and after that, we are contented to have them pass at such a valuation as the public shall adjudge. It is as easy to magnify as to disparage them. We think, however, that most of them, and especially "Letters on Frequent Communion," "A Plea for Sacramental Communion on Catholic Principles," "Essays on the Church," and "Essays on Episcopacy," accomplished the main objects which he had in view. It is much easier to claim victories over him, than to answer his arguments. It must not be forgotten, that when we unchurch every Christian society but our own, we take very high ground, and cannot escape notice. We hope, however, that such pretensions are urged with less frequency and less confidence in the present day than formerly.

J. V. V.

ALBANY, *February* 27, 1856.

CONTENTS.

Chapters.	*Dates.*	*Subjects.*	*Page*
I.	—1759–1792.	Biographical Sketch of his Father,	1
II.	—1770–1789.	Early Education,	12
III.	—1789–1791.	Studies Theology with his Father,	20
IV.	—1791–1892.	Studies at Edinburgh,	29
V.	—1792–1801.	Settlement and Early Ministry,	54
VI.	—1793–1801.	Success in his Labours,	66
VII.	—1801.	Call for Ministers,	75
VIII.	—1801.	Mission to Scotland,	82
IX.	—1802.	Results,	97
X.	—1802.	Visits London,	107
XI.	—1802.	Proceedings on his Return,	118
XII.	—1803–4.	Foreign Correspondence,	129
XIII.	—1803–4.	Home Correspondence,	164
XIV.	—1804.	The Seminary,	171
XV.	—1804.	The Death of Hamilton,	182
XVI.	—1804.	Correspondence,	192
XVII.	—1805.	The Cause of Education and Missions,	213
XVIII.	—1805.	The Seminary,	224
XIX.	—1805.	Classical Education,	239
XX.	—1806.	Correspondence,	250
XXI.	—1806.	The Seminary,	270
XXII.	—1807.	Magazine and Letters,	284
XXIII.	—1807.	Missionaries from London,	290
XXIV.	—1808.	Congregational Libraries. Journey through New England,	308
XXV.	—1809.	Vindication. The Magazine. Assistant,	327
XXVI.	—1810.	Columbia College,	339

Chapters.	*Dates.*	*Subjects.*	*Page*
XXVII.	—1810.	Resignation of his Pastoral Charge,	341
XXVIII.	—1810-1811.	Psalmody. Com. Distress. Chinese Mission,	366
XXIX.	—1811-1812.	Intercommunion,	382
XXX.	—1813.	Care for Friends. Western Churches,	393
XXXI.	—1814.	A Challenge. Columbia College, etc.,	400
XXXII.	—1814-1815.	General Synod. Letters,	412
XXXIII.	—1816.	Preparation for a Voyage,	418
XXXIV.	—1816.	In England, Scotland, and Paris,	435
XXXV.	—1816-1817.	On the Continent,	444
XXXVI.	—1817.	In England,	461
XXXVII.	—1818.	Mission to the Western Churches,	475
XXXVIII.	—8119.	Western Churches. The Seminary. Letters,	487
XXXIX.	—1820-1829.	Evening of his Days,	510
XL.		Conclusion.	524

APPENDIX.

Appendix A 547

Appendix B 555

MEMOIRS

OF

JOHN M. MASON.

CHAPTER I.

1761—1792.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF HIS FATHER.

Mission to America—First interview with his people—Church Edifice—The war—Formation of the Associate Reformed Church—Defence of it—Theological Dissertations—Attempted union with the Presbyterian and Dutch Churches—Several writings—Death and Character—Twice Married—Children and Descendants.

JOHN MASON, the father of John M. Mason, emigrated to this country from Scotland while a young man, in the year 1761. He came in consequence of repeated and earnest applications made to the ecclesiastical body with which he was connected. About seven or eight years before this time, some of the ministers and people, who had previously come over to America and were attached to that branch of the Caledonian Church which is commonly called the Secession, had formed themselves into an organization known at the time as "The Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania," subordinate to the Associate Synod of Scotland. Many letters and petitions were sent from this body, and from the Associate Congregation of New-York, to the mother country for a supply of ministers. At a meeting of the Synod held at Edinburgh, October 11, 1759, several such applications were presented, designating "Mr. John Mason, Teacher of Philosophy at Abernethy," in a seminary of learning and theology, as the first object of their choice, and promising him due encouragement in his work. After mature deliberation and special prayer, the desired appointment was made. With a view to this mission, on the 5th of August, 1760, Mr. Mason was solemnly set apart to the sacred office at the city of Perth, by the Presbytery of Perth and Dunfermline. The minutes of the transaction inform us, that "the ordination sermon was preached by Mr. Alexander Preston," from a text, which, considering the light in which America was at this period regarded, must have been deemed peculiarly appropriate: viz. Luke xxii. 35. "When I sent you without purse and scrip and shoes, lacked ye anything? and they said, nothing."

For some adequate reason, Mr. Mason did not sail till the Spring following, when he was accompanied by two other missionaries—Mr. Robert Annan and Mr. John Smart. The latter of these gentlemen, after a few years, returned home. The former continued to labour as an able minister of the New Testament, at Wallkill, N. Y., Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and other places, till the close of a long life in 1820.

When Mr. Mason arrived at New York, the people who had sent for him, tradition informs us, met together for his reception. A small parlour was sufficient to contain them. Perceiving so few assembled, and those apparently in humble and limited circumstances, he felt constrained to ask whether they could not muster any more; and whether they were able to support the ordinances of the gospel among them? After a pause, a pious old lady answered, "We will try." "Upon this, they all took courage, and soon commenced operations. The formal call was dated 25th May, 1762, and signed by Samuel Loudon, Alexander Robertson, Jonathan Blake, Henry Spainger, James Wilson, George Watson, Gilbert Smith, John McDonald, and about thirty others, some of them females, and several of them making their marks instead of writing their names. Dr. Miller, in his "Memoirs of Dr. Rogers," says, they had seceded from the First Presbyterian Church, because "incurably dissatisfied with the system of Psalmody, which the majority had chosen to adopt."

Such was their feeble and not flattering beginning. But they "despised not the day of small things." They grew and prospered. Their first house of worship was a small frame building, erected on the south side of Cedar street, between Nassau street and Broadway. In 1768 this gave place to a more commodious stone edifice erected on the same site, which stood till the year 1837, when, in order to overtake the population, it became necessary, in the current phrase, "to move up town," and erect another in Grand street. That which in 1837 was "up town," had in 1853, again become "down town," so as to require another removal. At that date, the large and flourishing congregation, under the care of their fourth pastor, the Rev. Joseph McElroy, D.D., erected a new edifice in Fourteenth street, which they have since continued to occupy.

Mr. Mason labored successfully in his congregation till the outbreaking of the revolutionary war, when, being a strong Whig, and espousing the cause of the Colonies with zeal, he was obliged to leave the city; and of course his flock, like all others of the same political opinions, became scattered for a period of eight years. He entered the army as chaplain, and continued in this capacity till the return of peace. On one occasion, it is said, he insisted upon serving likewise as a soldier, and would not quit the ranks till peremptorily ordered away by the officer of his regiment, Col. Malcolm, who happened to be a member of his church. In a letter to the Rev. John Brown, of Haddington, dated January, 1786, he pathetically laments the disastrous effects of the war upon the churches, and the interests of religion.

The Revolution however, had the good effect of convincing many Christians on this side of the Atlantic, that our churches had the same resource as those abroad, and that, as much as our States, they might, with propriety and even advantage, become independent of foreign jurisdiction. This led, in the year 1782, to the union of various classes of Scottish Seceders and Covenanters, in a society still known as the "Associate Reformed Church in North America."*

A union so obviously called for by the circumstances of the case and so fraught with the most beneficial results, was from its commencement warmly espoused by Mr. Mason. Indeed he had for several years before been a decided advocate of measures which had this tendency. He had characterized the dispute between the two branches of the Secession as "the dry, the fruitless, the disgracing, the pernicious controversy about the burgess-oath." He had moreover, said: "This controversy has done infinite injury to the cause of God in Scotland, and wherever it has shed its influences. For my own part, I cannot reflect upon it without shame and perplexity. Though we differ only about the meaning of some burgess-oaths and some acts of Parliament, our mutual opposition has been as fierce as probably it would have been, had we differed about the most important points of Christianity."*

---

* McKerrow's History of the Secession Church, vol. ii., p. 293. Note.

The new organization, however, and the policy which led to it, were as warmly opposed by others, who perpetuated the division with its attendant evils,—so that to this day, for reasons the most unintelligible or trifling, we still have Burghers, Anti-burghers, and Cameronians, sprinkled here and there through our widely extended country, often contending as earnestly against each other, as against the common foe; instead of one large, united, and efficient body of sound and useful Christians. The friends and advocates of the liberal policy were maligned as latitudinarians, who were unfaithful to their vows and to those principles of the Reformation for which their ancestors had suffered the pains of martyrdom. Such representations reached the mother country, and one of their effects was a motion, by a person no less distinguished than the Rev. Adam Gib, of Edinburgh, that "the Synod should erase Mr. Mason's name from their roll, and no longer acknowledge him to be one of their number, till they should have opportunity of bringing his case to a proper trial; and that an injunction should be sent to the Presbytery of Pennsylvania to *lay him aside* from a seat among them, until they should receive satisfaction for his conduct." After some delay this motion was, in 1780, adopted by the Synod.† In addition to this, a letter of solemn rebuke was written to all those brethren and churches that had come into the union. These transactions led to a masterly defence of the union, sent by Mr. Mason, under direction of his Synod, to the Anti-burgher Synod of Scotland. This paper must have been written about the year 1784, and was addressed immediately to Rev. William Moncrief, at that time their Professor of Divinity.

It is such a noble monument of the times; it embodies such vital principles of ecclesiastical policy, applicable to every age; often violated, and not always kept strictly in view by Associate Reformed churches themselves; and it moreover breathes such an excellent spirit of sound Christianity, as richly to deserve preservation in a volume like the present. Though too long to be incorporated with our narrative, it will be given in an appendix.

---

* McKerrow's History, vol. i., p. 407.

† McKerrow's History vol. i., p. 408.

In this connexion it likewise seems fitting to insert a letter, which, with a copy of the newly adopted "Constitution of the Associate Reformed Church," was sent to the Rev. Alexander Shanks, Moderator of the Associate Synod [Anti-burgher], Scotland:—

New York, Sept. 27, 1784.

Rev. and dear Sir: By order of the Associate Reformed Synod I send you a copy of their Constitution. It was unfortunately published without those formalities which are esteemed necessary to authenticate Public Instruments. This was owing to an accident which I need not mention to you.

I intended to have written a long letter to you by this conveyance, but as I am just emerging from a weakness, under which I languished for several months, and am much fatigued with public service, I can do little more, at present, than assure you, in the name of the Synod, that we have a sincere regard for the brethren of your denomination, and wish to cultivate a friendly correspondence with them.

It will, I presume, be evident to every person who impartially attends to our Constitutional Articles, in their connexion, that we resolve to adhere to the Presbyterian system, as exhibited in the Confession of Faith, &c.; though we have detached it from those local appendages which have not any relation to this country.

May the blessing of God rest on your Synod, and may vital piety prosper and triumph in all the congregations under their inspection. I am, Rev. and dear Sir,

Your affectionate brother and humble servant,

JOHN MASON.

We subjoin also part of a letter to his sister in Scotland, dated September 16, 1784:—

"During the greatest part of the war I was chaplain to the principal garrison of the Americans at West Point, on the Hudson River, &c.

"I perceive that you have been greatly imposed upon by the wicked report of my apostacy from the truth. My brethren and I have indeed withdrawn our subordination from the Synod; but we have not done this on principles of apostacy, but of necessity. The circumstances of the church in this country are so different from your circumstances in Scotland, that the truth cannot be applied here precisely in the same way as at home; nor can terms of communion be stated in the same manner. As we found we could not manage the Presbyterian cause with any propriety in connexion with the Synod, who would have everything done in their own way—though they are incompetent to judge of our circumstances—we were obliged to break our connexions; retaining at the same time a sincere regard for the Synod, and for the cause of truth which they have espoused."

At a meeting of the Associate Reformed Synod, held in the city of Philadelphia, May 16, 1787, the Rev. Dr. John Mason (the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity having been previously conferred upon him), with the Rev. Robert Annan and the Rev. John Smith, were appointed "to prepare and publish a draught of an overture for the purpose of illustrating and defending the doctrines of the Confession of Faith adopted by their Church." The trust reposed in them was executed by this Committee with marked ability, and before the end of the year resulted in the publication of an excellent series of dissertations on the leading doctrines of divine revelation, as exhibited in that Confession. In an introduction to this publication, the Committee say: "We heartily espouse the Testimony of the Scotch Secession, as to its spirit and substance; but we lament the mismanagement of the good cause, especially by schism and division among themselves, than which nothing contributed more to harden the leaders of the defection in their tyrannical courses. At the same time we do not wish to perplex the church here with merely local controversies, such as that about the lawfulness of swearing a religious clause in a certain burgess-oath, which has no place any where on earth, but in a few cities of Scotland, and can certainly affect no person's conscience here; or that about the lawfulness of submission to the civil power in Britain, while we all readily acknowledge and submit to the civil authority in the United States." The Associate Reformed Church was, however, never recognized by any judicatory in Scotland till long afterwards, as we shall have occasion to notice in another place.

Previous to this—even as early as 1770 and 1771—attempts had been made to form a union with the Synod of New York and Philadelphia (now the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church); but, for reasons which can be explained on principles of prejudice and ambition more easily than on those of wisdom or Christian charity, they all failed. Brethren of the same family, were still doomed to appear before the world under the unseemly and weakened aspect of a "house divided against itself." No division or discord of the times however, is chargeable upon old Dr. Mason.

Friendly conferences between delegates from these bodies were also held in the years 1785 and 1787; but resulted only in expressions of mutual regard and confidence; in a better acquaintance with each other; and a more agreeable intercourse.

In a convention held at New York, October, 1788, and composed of delegates from several religious denominations, we again find Dr. Mason deliberating for the promotion of a common Christianity with such men as Drs. Witherspoon and Smith, of the Presbyterian Church, and Drs. Hardenburgh, Romeyn, Linn, and Frœligh, of the Dutch Church. But it would seem, that the time had not yet come for a step so desirable as an ecclesiastical union between bodies so nearly united in doctrine, government, and spirit. Whoever, from time to time, may have originated the various measures for this object, Dr. Mason was always their decided and undeviating advocate.

We cannot be surprised therefore, that he lived on terms of intimacy with ministerial brethren of different denominations; especially with Drs. Laidlie, Livingston, and Rodgers. Interesting notices to this effect may be seen in the Biographies of Dr. Rodgers, Dr. Livingston, and Mrs. Graham.

Besides the part which he took in preparing the dissertations referred to above, he left in manuscript his strong objections to the monarchical principle of church government as embodied in both the English and the Papal Hierarchy.

He also prepared a memorial to the Legislature of New Jersey (in which State his family resided during the war), pointing out at large the superstitious nature of oaths administered by the ceremony of kissing the Gospels, and praying in behalf of tender consciences for exemption from that mode of swearing.

Having considerable intercourse with the Governor, he likewise expostulated with him earnestly on the propriety of incorporating with the organic law of the State a distinct recognition of the Christian as the true religion, as the basis of good morals and as eminently calculated to promote the best ends and interests of civil government, if not absolutely essential to the stability of Republican institutions. Such a general recognition he thought would not in the least degree infringe upon the rights of conscience; which rights he always most strenuously advocated. He thought, that even liberty itself could not be permanently secured without subjection to that great and good Being "whose service is perfect freedom." An admirable letter on this subject to his Excellency, dated Bedminster, N. J., June 1st, 1778, is found among his papers.

The following testimony we have from one of his early students, Mr. John Young (author of a treatise on the French Revolution, which ranked among the ablest on that fruitful subject, and for which he was offered a pension by the king), dated Hawick, 25th November, 1801:—

"In the year 1756, the Synod appointed Mr. Mason their Professor of Philosophy at Abernethy. In that office he continued four years; consequently he taught two classes, to the last of which I belonged. The first year he taught us Logic, a system of which he himself had compiled. He then gave us prelections on De Vries' Ontology and Pneumatology. The second year he gave us a sketch of Mathematics, with Moral and Natural Philosophy. His Compendium Logicæ, I believe is the best extant. He always delivered his prelections in Latin, which language he spake with a fluency and propriety which I never knew equalled. We always met twice a day. He began with examining us on his last prelection, and then delivered another, generally of an hour's length; so that he lectured two hours every day, unless when some of the students had an exegesis or something of that kind to deliver. We also met once a week for prayer and religious conversation, in which he excelled."

His character has also been ably drawn by Dr. S. Miller, of Princeton, in his "Life of Dr. Rogers:"—

"Dr. Mason was a man of a sound and strong mind, of extensive learning, and of unusually fervent piety. His scholarship was rare. At the age of 24 he taught Logic and Moral Philosophy, with reputation, in the Theological Seminary of the Anti-burghers, at Abernethy. His lectures were in Latin. As a preacher, he was uncommonly judicious and instructive; as a pastor, singularly faithful and diligent; as a friend and companion, he displayed an assemblage of excellencies rarely found in so great a degree in one person. Few ministers have ever lived in New York, in so high esteem, or died so generally and deeply lamented." (*Memoirs of the Rev. John Rogers, D.D., p.* 163.)

Mrs. Isabella Graham, who was present at his death-bed, remarks in a letter dated, April 23, 1792: "My dear minister's bitter draught is over. On Thursday the 19th of this month, the Lord received his spirit, and laid his weary flesh to rest. Like his Master, he groaned, but never complained. He had a draught of his Master's cup, but the bitter ingredient—desertion—made no part of it. I had the honour to close his dear eyes, and to shut those dear lips, from whence so many precious truths have proceeded, and to mix with the ministering spirits who attended to hail the released."*

Mrs. Bethune, a daughter of Mrs. Graham touches some other particulars:—

"To Dr. Mason's character, I cannot do justice. But though more than a half a century has elapsed, I have still a vivid recollection of his personal appearance and manner. He was of middle stature, not corpulent, black hair, and mild but penetrating black eye; of great decision, staid deportment and gentlemanly manners; very strict in family discipline, and given to hospitality. His sermons were well studied, his delivery plain and energetic, all with a view to the glory of his Master and the salvation of souls.

"If anecdotes were admissible the following one might tend to illustrate his soundness of judgment. Mr. Clark, a good but very eccentric minister from Ireland travelled as a missionary through the United States and occasionally preached for Dr. Mason. On one of these occasions, being much annoyed by certain high head-dresses which he saw worn by some of the congregation, he did not spare them in his discourse. 'My dear Sir,' the Doctor replied to him afterwards, 'my business is more with the hearts of my hearers than with their head-dresses. If I can bring them in humble contrition at the Saviour's feet, I have no further trouble. But suppose, brother Clark, that some poor sinner smitten in conscience by your rebukes should call upon you to morrow morning and anxiously inquire what pattern of head-dress she might wear, are you prepared to describe the exact style of millinery which you would recommend?' Brother Clark was silent."

---

* Life of Mrs. Graham, ch. IV.

He was twice married; in both instances happily, and in both became connected with respectable Dutch families in New York.

His first consort was Catharine Van Wyck, a woman of solid understanding and of solid piety. She united all her influence with that of her husband in ordering their household in the manner best calculated to promote their well-being in both the present and the future life. In written reminiscences, her grand-daughter, Mrs. Knox, remarks: "I have heard her spoken of by her sisters with the deepest reverence and affection. Her heartfelt and intelligent piety was unquestioned. I have heard it said, that it was her custom to slip out of church immediately after morning service, and assemble her family for worship, conducting the exercises herself, as grandfather Mason always went from the pulpit to his study, and remained there till church time in the afternoon, never eating after breakfast till his public duties were finished for the day." She died June 31, 1784.

She bore him nine children, of whom only three lived to maturity. The oldest of these, named Helen, became the wife of Matthew Duncan, a merchant in Philadelphia, and the mother of the eloquent John M. Duncan, D.D., pastor, for many years, of the Associate Reformed Church in the city of Baltimore. The savour of her memory in the family is sweet. The second was the subject of these memoirs. The youngest was Margaretta, whose native powers of mind, superior cultivation and elegant accomplishments, qualified her to shine in any sphere. She was married to the Honourable John Brown, one of the first Senators in Congress from Kentucky; to which State she removed with him, and settled at Frankfort, where their two sons, Mason and Orlando, still reside, and occupy a high position in society.

His second marriage was with Sarah Van Alstyne, an amiable and pious woman, who survived him many years. She had no children of her own, but was much attached to those of her husband, and was in turn greatly beloved and honoured by them.

CHAPTER II.

1770—1789.

HIS EDUCATION.

Early Impressions—Profession of Religion—An Incident—A Fragment—Intellectual Culture—At College—Compositions.

JOHN MITCHEL MASON was born in city of New-York, on the 19th day of March, 1770. Having in infancy been consecrated to God by parents who justly estimated his higher relations, and who carefully trained him for the great end of his existence and his redemption, he early became a subject of such religious convictions as are usually connected with true Christian character. He felt the weight of his guilt before God, his need of a Saviour, and an ineffable satisfaction in the excellence and fulness of that Divine Saviour who is made known to us in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. At nine years of age, he sometimes passed several hours in the day in the garret of his father's house with Ralph Erskine's sermon, entitled 'Faith's Plea upon God's Word,' reading and praying, and weeping by turns. Whether he was enabled at this time to take that great and decisive step by which a fallen creature passes into a new spiritual condition, we know not. It is probable that his judicious and discriminating parents, did not so early discover those strong evidences on which they afterwards relied. At least a few years later, while he was attending school at Newark, N. J., his mother in an affectionate letter, dated July 26th, 1783, exhorts her "dear Johnny to show his gratitude to God for the blessing of health, by improving it to his glory;" and then adds: "The time of health and youth is the most proper season for seeking God, for securing your salvation by flying to Jesus Christ, receiving him by a true faith as he is offered in the gospel; beg that you may be helped to this, which, if you are enabled to do, your soul will be safe and you need not fear."

At the age of seventeen, he was received into his father's church as a member in full communion. An occasion soon occurred which must have tried the strength of his principles on a point which older professors often think it prudent to yield to the feelings of an irreligious world. Nor did he by his resolution, as is often done on such occasions, lower the name which he sought to honour. The incident is related by his sister, Mrs. Brown, in a letter to her nephew, the late Rev. Ebenezer Mason: "He and myself, in company with a number of our young acquaintances, took an early walk to breakfast at one of the public gardens in Greenwich. When seated at the table, my brother requested our friends to wait a moment while he should ask a blessing. The company, who were all gay and volatile, appeared thunderstruck. 'God was not in all their thoughts.' Even his worldly-minded sister felt abashed, and thought the business ill-timed. He however asked a blessing and returned thanks; and I was much surprised a few days afterwards, that an elderly gentleman of considerable consequence in the political and fashionable circles of the day, but an avowed Deist, who happened to be with us, had remarked that he should always respect that young man for the moral courage which he exhibited, in daring to do what he believed right, even in the face of ridicule."

Notwithstanding such an instance of courage, he had sore conflicts with himself in secret, indicating a deep consciousness of imperfect attainments in the Christian life. At the age of eighteen, a fast-day was marked by such exercises of mind as pious persons can well appreciate. The following paper in his own handwriting, shows, not only a careful self-inspection, but a habit, which he early commenced and afterwards perfected, of clearly analyzing the Scriptures, for both personal improvement and public usefulness. Indeed, it will often be seen in the progress of these pages, that his mental development, in every stage of it, derived the most incalculable advantage from an early and intimate acquaintance with the sacred volume:—

September 25th, 1788.

The holy Psalmist, after having examined himself, and obtained a view of his sins, cries out in the anguish of his soul that his "iniquities are more in number than the hairs of his head."

With great propriety may I take up the complaint, and add that my sins are as much more numerous than the Psalmist's as his were than the hairs of his head; since these were committed against the brightest light of the New Testament dispensation, and frequently in the face of conscience, and in direct opposition to the strivings of the Holy Spirit by way of conviction.

It is therefore a very important duty on a day of fasting and humiliation, to inquire with awful solemnity and impartiality, whether the guilt of these sins has, or has not been washed out in the blood of the Lamb; to make sincere confession of them to God, driving self-partiality from every refuge to which it may betake itself, and to bring the heart and conversation to the infallible test of God's unerring word; and as the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, to look up to the Lord, that he would send down his searching Spirit, to take the work into his own hands, beseeching him, that, if my state should be found, upon impartial trial to be Christless, he would not permit me to be one moment at ease till I had cordially closed with the Redeemer as he is offered by free grace in the Gospel. But if, on the other hand, I should find any good reason to believe that I belonged to the little flock of his true disciples, that he would be pleased to witness, by the powerful application of his word and the sensible presence of his spirit, my title to the character of a child of God.

After then, having considered the state of my soul, reflected upon the workings of corruption therein, and charged conscience as in the presence of the heart-searching God, not to say any more than it will own on the tremendous day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be made manifest; and having my eye fixed upon the Lord as my guide, I have ventured upon the following conclusions:—

1. That notwithstanding my multiplied and highly aggravated sins, in grieving the Holy Spirit—in looking over, and (often) indulging secret lusts, in acts of unbelief, in breaking the covenant of my God, with many other species of transgressions against all and each of his holy commandments, notwithstanding all these, it is still the resolution of my soul, from time to time, to cast myself upon free grace, and to live and die at the throne of mercy.

2. That, if I know my own heart, I am pleased with the plan of salvation of free grace, and am willing to receive the Saviour upon his own terms, giving God the glory of my redemption, and renouncing all dependence on the works of the law.

3. That sin, as sin, is the burden of my soul; that salvation from it is the great desire of my heart; that holiness is my aim; and conformity to the image of God, my highest wish.

4. That upon these considerations, I would humbly attempt to claim the Redeemer as my Redeemer, and therefore as before God and his witnessing spirits, take him as my Lord and Master in all his offices, renouncing all former lovers, entering my protest at his throne against future slips, devoting myself soul and body to his service, determined through grace, to follow him through good report and bad report, looking up to him for support, and expecting with resignation the accomplishment of his promise to send the Holy Spirit, that my soul may rejoice in his love, and that my salvation may go forth as a lamp that burneth. Amen.

JOHN M. MASON.

Δοζα μονῳ τῳ Θεῳ.

Blessed be God for the glorious message in Luke xxii. 31 32. "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have thee, that he may sift thee as wheat, but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not, and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

In this passage there seems to be the following things implied:—

1. That though the Lord might permit Satan to trouble Peter, yet he would support him by Divine grace, that his faith might be strong and obtain the victory over temptations.

2. That he *was* a chosen vessel, and *should* be recovered from any slips that he might make, and thereby be fitted for eminent service to the church of God.

3. That his duty was, after having received such distinguished mercy, to strengthen his brethren, by showing them the fulness of the Redeemer's grace, and exhorting them to wait upon him with resignation to his will.

4. That the comfort and victory of believers is sure, as Christ has *already* prayed for them, yet they must wait his own time for the receiving of that comfort.

5. That they who have had the sorest conflicts with temptations and the corruption of their own heart, are the fittest to confirm the faith of their brethren.

6. That in the severest trials we should not despair, because we have a great high priest within the vail, pleading our cause, whom the Father heareth always.

J. M. M.

The intellectual part of his character likewise became early developed. At seven years of age he had read through the whole of Rollin's Ancient History. Yet the unsettled state of things during the war of the Revolution, when he was passing through much of the forming, and thus most important period of his life, he must have been deprived of many advantages. We are not distinctly informed at what school he acquired the rudiments of the classics or of mathematics. It is certain, however, that the instruction which he received from his father at every stage of his education, he always valued more highly than any which he received from all other sources, whether in school, college, or theological hall.

In the year 1787, we find him a student in Columbia College, New York, where he took his first degree, May 6th, 1789. His instructors and classmates have accorded to him the reputation of abilities and industry, of good scholarship, and correct deportment. One of them, Professor Cochran, afterwards a church dignitary in the province of Nova Scotia, writes: "If I feel partiality for all whom I have instructed, I surely do it for him who is the son of my most valued friend; and that pupil whom I was always proud to point out as giving great promise."

But some of his compositions written at this period, afford a more unequivocal and better defined testimony of what he was. Though not free from juvenile imperfections, they indicate, we think, attainments, mental discipline, power of continuous thinking, force of expression, acquaintance with history and the classics, and skill in using them both for illustration and ornament, which are not common with boys in their teens. At the same time they exhibit some striking features which distinctly presage the future character. They illustrate the adage that "the child is the father of the man." The swelling bud foretold the coming flower and fruit. His method, it seems, was not so much to write insulated pieces on separate subjects, as series of them in continuation on the same subject. Two of such series have been preserved: one running through eight numbers on "Self-command;" the other, consisting of the same number, the last two of which are in Latin, on "Duelling." The development of his mind would best appear by publishing these entire; but, brevity being our aim, a small part must suffice. The following is No. 4 of the first series, and is dated Columbia College, July 26, 1788:—

"We have already seen the importance of bringing our actions to the standard of reason, and of holding the reins of strict and inflexible command over the passions, in order to secure an impartial administration of justice; in order to rise in the confidence of our country, and thus to honourable distinction; in order to preserve tranquility in one's own breast; in order to be instrumental in promoting the happiness of others; and in order to discuss with propriety and truth any matter which may be submitted to our decision.

"Let us now take another view of the subject, and examine the utility of self-command with respect to *the consequences of actions.* It is usual with many, particularly in the younger and more ardent part of life, when a new theme strikes their fancy, to think of nothing but the means of accomplishing it. A more fallacious course can scarcely be imagined. They who are governed by sudden and strong impulses, and can assign no reason for their measures but first impressions, seem to forget that appearances are often deceitful, and may lead us into mistakes the most fatal. Careful examination is necessary for acquiring a correct knowledge of what ought to be done, and what omitted. But he who acts from the blind dictates of impulse or passion, rushes on with precipitancy, regardless of consequences, and not unfrequently is hurled from the pinnacle of hope into the abyss of woe.

"The ingenious Æsop, in one of his fables, furnishes a striking lesson against such rashness, when he introduces two frogs discoursing on the best method of procuring a supply of water on the drying up of the ponds. One of them was for leaping without ceremony into a deep well. But the other, who appeared a more sagacious frog, hindered him, saying: 'Stop, brother; in case the well should likewise dry up, what would become of us?' The moral is, that we should be cautious, and weigh well our designs before we execute them. It often happens, that, what at first sight seems very agreeable and wise, upon mature examination, proves the worst evil that can befall us."

In No. 5, he considers his subject in its relation to conversation, where there is often occasion for restraining the "unruly member." In No. 6, he views it in relation to the spirit of detraction; and in No. 7, to sallies of wit. In No. 8, he answers objections, and solves difficulties. The following is a specimen:—

"Some may object, that the strength of their passions is so confirmed by habit as to render the restraint of them impracticable. This objection is as futile as the former. If the ancient adage, 'consuetudo est altera natura,' be true, why cannot a steady perseverance in a correct course acquire the force of habit? and why may not one habit be supplanted by another? Besides, facts prove it not only practicable, but frequently more easy than could at first be imagined. There are so many examples of persons surmounting the most discouraging difficulties, that no excuse can be left on this score for any who will make the attempt; and using this as a plea for irresolution is nothing but a virtual declaration, that they are contented to remain slaves to their passions.

"Another class may perhaps be more assuming, and to palliate their pusillanimity, say: 'We cannot alter the disposition God has given us.' Presumptuous objector! Wouldest thou throw the blame of an evil bent at heaven's door? Shall the author of all perfection impart a principle directly contrary to His holy nature? God may permit, but never gave a bad disposition. Away with the iniquitous supposition! The genius of his religion breathes nothing but peace on earth and good will to men, and the spirit of every endearing virtue which ornaments the human soul. Has He not commanded us to be meek and lowly, and to subject every vicious propensity to reason's mild dominion? Has He appointed the end without appointing likewise the means? The thought is pregnant with blasphemy. What is the tendency of it, but to accuse Him, in whom dwells the fulness of wisdom and compassion, of folly and tyranny?"

CHAPTER III.

1789-1791.

STUDIES THEOLOGY WITH HIS FATHER,

Method of Study—Diligence—Difficulties Encountered—Exegetical Fragments—Diary.

After leaving college, in 1789, he commenced the study of Theology as a profession with his father; at the same time continuing privately the study of the Latin and Greek classics. The method adopted by his father, and afterwards so earnestly recommended by himself, was to take, not any systematic treatise, but the Bible itself for his text book, and to examine that very thoroughly in the original languages, in its entire connexions, and with all the aids which could be derived from ancient geography, history, poetry, customs, and opinions both philosophical and religious, whether Jewish, Grecian, or Oriental. Aside from the Sacred Scriptures, his plan was to study more by subjects than by books—using systems of Divinity rather for purposes of arrangement than of investigation. He knew that of authors there was no end; and that in the perusal of them, there was often more weariness than profit. He knew too, that the student would much more readily learn to bring his own faculties into efficient action and use (the great object of education) by accustoming him to look into the nature of the subject itself, than to read a very great deal of what other men have thought. It is certain that under this kind of training, the mind of Mr. Mason became what it afterwards was; and that he always gave his father the greatest credit for it.

The closeness of his application at this period, his attention to classical literature, and his admiration of it, as well as the character and influence of his father, are somewhat indicated by a letter, dated New York, Feb. 4, 1790:—

"Never was I so completely employed as at present. While engaged in academical studies I thought that their termination would put a period to a great part of my labour. This was the groundless fancy of inexperience. I am now thoroughly persuaded of what my father often told me, and what I never could believe, that a course of college education is mere play. .Every moment, from morning till night, and as much of the night as possible, has its constant employment. To a leisure hour through the day, I am an entire stranger. Even now I sacrifice the pursuits of study to the requisitions of friendship. Such confinement, however, is far from being painful. Encompassed with the grave volumes of ancient literature, I feel myself as in the company of Grecian and Roman sages. While I read their works, I think I hear them speak. I am every day more and more convinced, and my opinion is confirmed by the voices of learned men in every age, that he who can peruse with indifference the writings of those men, who, while they instruct the judgment, fire the imagination and affect the heart, must be callous to the beauties of style, and to the dignity of sentiment. Think not that I undervalue the productions of modern genius. Far from it; but if I err in preferring the classics, my error is to be accounted for; it flows from emotions excited by the unrivalled excellence of transcendent genius."

In his theological course, he sometimes became exceedingly discouraged at the slowness of his progress. On one occasion, he came to his father, lamenting that he had encountered a difficulty, which, after three hours of the most intense application, appeared as formidable as ever. "Three hours!" replied his father, "if you thoroughly master a real difficulty in three *weeks*, you are doing remarkably well." He himself afterwards came most fully to the same conclusion. He has often been heard to say, that to learn the precise point of a difficulty, and clearly define its shape in one's own mind, is studying to good purpose, and is more than half his preparation for solving it. And the solution gained by this severe process is of far greater value than if he had been brought to it in an easier way by the assistance of others. The business of education, he thought, was to bring the pupil's own powers into play. It was not so much to impart to him the knowledge of others, as to form habits for acquiring knowledge by himself, and for using it when acquired.

On another occasion, his father came into his room with a newspaper in his hand, requesting him to read an article which he considered a triumphant vindication of the Christian Sabbath, in answer to an infidel attack which had appeared not long before. The blushes and embarrassment of the pupil, betrayed the authorship of the article. The old gentleman, without speaking another word, took the paper with him, and in his own study subjected it in every part to the most critical examination, and pointed out every imperfection which his closest scrutiny could detect. With these strictures carefully written down, he returned to his son. The latter was pained by the very strict ordeal through which his composition had passed; but ever afterwards, as he has often been heard to express himself, felt thankful for the benefit which it had afforded him. He was thus taught, that, even after successful efforts, yet higher and higher degrees of excellence may be attained; and that vigorous minds should willingly bear whatever mortification or labour may be necessary for the highest. It is not by flattery or indulgence, but by severe discipline, that minds really great are made.

It is always interesting to trace the inner life of Christians—its commencement and its progress,—its struggles and its triumphs. For this reason there need be no apology for introducing what follows. The state of Mr. Mason's mind at this period, respecting his relations to the Supreme Being and the interests of eternity, as well as to the great work for which he was preparing, may be gathered from portions of a diary, or private thoughts which he committed to writing. Specimens are subjoined; and others will be reserved for future chapters.

Some, it will be seen, were written in New York; some in Edinburgh; and some after his return.

"DECEMBER, 29th, 1790. O Sin, what hast thou done? Into what wretchedness hast thou plunged man? How hast thou enervated all his powers, and made him pleased with his weakness and wickedness? Misery must be the fruit of sin. God is the fountain of light and happiness, and, in the nature of things, darkness and woe and death must proceed from distance from Him, as inevitably as cold is produced by the absence of the sun. I feel, I feel the melancholy truth. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? As the hart panteth for the water brooks, so panteth my soul for God, the living God. Compassionate Saviour, send forth thy light and thy truth! Send help from Thy holy hill, that I may rejoice in Thy salvation! Precious Christ, precious righteousness, precious atonement! It is all my salvation; it is all my desire! Here I am warranted to rest my faith. Here my soul is safe. Why should I doubt the Redeemer's willingness to receive me? At any rate, if I forsake him, there is no hope for me. If I venture upon Him, I may find a welcome. He has said, him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out: he cannot deny himself: and on this promise will I hang begging for salvation from the free grace of God. Let others say or think what they please about good dispositions, &c., sure I am that if ever I be saved, my salvation will be entirely of sovereign, unmerited grace. I find my heart to be just what God declares it, deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; and were he not to keep me, I should instantly run from him; let him, therefore, have all the glory, while I reap the benefit.

"DECEMBER 30th and 31st. Darkness and doubt, lethargy and listlessness, the furious workings of corruption, the hiding of God's countenance, render my soul miserable. O when shall the day break, the shadows flee away, and that day-star arise in my mind. It is the end of the old year, would to God it might be the end of my old state of distance from him!

"JANUARY 1st, 1791. Another year is past, and whither is it gone? What can I show to prove that I have been redeeming the time? I am this day a year nearer to my long home than I was the 1st of last January: am I better prepared to meet my God? What improvement have I made? What corruptions are subdued? What advances in holiness have I made? what returns to the Lord who has fed and clothed me all my life long unto this hour? May this new year be one of a new life in my soul. In this year will the Lord manifest himself to me? My soul is in bondage; may the jubilee of my deliverance now come! Have I not long enough served sin, Satan, and the world? It is a dreadful service. May I now become one of Christ's freemen. I need thy salvation as much as any poor sinner can need it. Jesus, Master, have mercy on me; manifest thyself to me, and then I will proclaim thy love to others. Let me not, oh! let me not preach an unknown Christ. I fly to the arms of redeeming love. Thou hast said, come to me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take me, blessed Saviour, take me, behold I am thine. I accept thy offer, I believe thy promise. Lord, 'do as thou hast said.'"

"JANUARY 7th. I find every day more and more reason to confess that I am all as an unclean thing, and my very righteousnesses are as filthy rags. And I do fade as a leaf, and mine iniquities, like the wind, have taken me away. Is. lxiv., 6.

"Remember, I beseech thee, thy gracious word 'on which thou hast caused thy servant to hope:' 'Satan hath desired to have thee that he may sift thee as wheat, but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not.' This word of thine is 'my comfort in mine affliction.' Scarcely a day or night passes in which the Satan without, and the Satan within, do not sift me. Great captain of salvation, bind the strong man. Wash me, Lord, wash me clean in the blood of the Saviour, that fountain which is opened for sin and uncleanness. I plead his righteousness, not only for justification, but for sanctification. This is my only hope. Every thing in myself deserves damnation.

"How apt are we to say, in the moments of peace and joy, 'my mountain stands strong, and I shall never be moved!' This is to make a Christ of our frame, and as he will not give his glory to another, he will make us know that without him we can do nothing. No longer ago than yesterday, my freedom in pouring out my soul before God, the sweet tranquility arising from resting in his grace through the precious, precious Saviour, made me think, can I offend against such unmerited love? No, I am proof against temptation. But oh, how changed! Yesterday had not passed, before a furious storm of corruption demolished, in an instant, the fabric I had reared. When the everlasting arms are drawn but one moment from underneath me, I sink into deep mire; my strength is weakness; and my golden dreams vanish. We are prone to be off our guard; and in those very seasons in which our enemies seem far off, they are watching an opportunity to assault us; they then surprise, and often, oh, how often vanquish us! May a sense of my faults keep me humble, and near the Redeemer!"

"JANUARY 21st. This afternoon I will reckon among the days never to be forgotten. Uneasy under a sense of guilt, and reflecting on the high attainments of many who never know the Lord, I trembled at the apprehension lest I also, when weighed in the balances, might be found wanting. The remark of godly divines, that when the conscience is often alarmed, and not suffered to rest, these frequent visits often issue in real conversion, was constantly in my mind. But this could give no peace till the Saviour himself spoke. I heard his gentle voice, 'Behold I stand at the door and knock!' Never till now had these words such a sweet sound. I trusted that the inquietudes of my mind were the whispers of his spirit."

"FEBRUARY 4th, 1791. 'I cried unto the Lord with my voice, even unto God with my voice, and he heard me.' Corruptions had raged so furiously that I knew not what to do. Reflection on the riches and freedom of redeeming love made my heart tender, and laid me under a necessity, a sweet necessity, of going to the throne of grace and pouring out my complaints into the bosom of my Heavenly Father. He inclined his ear unto me. He told me: 'The God of peace will bruise Satan under your feet shortly.' Rom. xvi. 20. Now know 'I that the Lord' hath heard, and 'will hear from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand.' I know, that through Christ strengthening me I shall be more than a conqueror over my lusts. Oh, that the happy hour may speedily arrive! Till it do, Lord, give me grace to be humble; to be thankful for what I have already received, and to wait patiently for thy salvation. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

"March 19th, 1791. This day completes the twenty-first year of my age; and what account can I give of my time, of myself? Twenty-one years have I lived on God's earth; but what have I done for God's honour? He has fed and clothed me all my life long unto this day. He has showered down upon me the choicest blessings of his Providence. He has given me health which has scarcely known interruption. He has favoured me with an education calculated to render me useful to his Church, and to the world. He has supplied me with everything that my heart can desire, for prosecuting my studies and investigating truth. Time, opportunity, easy circumstances, convenient accommodation, books, and an invaluable director. He has caused me to be born of parents who were eminently pious. He has enabled them to be very faithful in their instructions to me, and to support their advices by correspondent example. He has imparted to my father the gift of government, by which he has preserved me from wicked courses, and accustomed me to filial obedience, and thus kept me from a multitude of sins. He has blessed me with a good reputation, and has not suffered me to forfeit it by vicious behaviour. He has not permitted me to rest satisfied with ~~eternal~~ external decency, but has, from time to time, awakened my conscience to a sense of guilt, and notwithstanding my obstinacy, and carelessness, and striving to quench the convictions of his Holy Spirit, he did not cut me off in mine iniquity, and cast me into hell, as, with unimpeachable justice, he might have done. He did not forsake me, nor leave me to myself, but returned and continued to knock at the door of my soul. He gradually opened my eyes to see the wretchedness of my situation, and the necessity of redemption from sin. He did not suffer me to be contented with the fig leaves of my own righteousness, but enlightened me farther, to see that by nature I am under the broken covenant of my father Adam; and, therefore, that even my righteousness is under the curse. He did not abandon me to despair, but led me to view Jesus Christ as the propitiation for sin; to be persuaded of his perfect righteousness; to find in his atonement the price of my justification before God. He made the Redeemer appear amiable in all his offices, of a prophet, priest, and king. He unfolded to my sight his infinite fulness, and his abundant willingness to save the vilest sinner, and my own warrant to believe on him as my Saviour. He bent my stubborn will into a cordial acquiescence in Divine sovereignty, and a joy in the plan of salvation by free grace. He led me, if I know myself, into an unreserved acceptance of Jesus Christ, and of God as my covenant God in him. He caused me to seal that acceptance, and avow it to the world by taking my seat at his table. He has there lifted upon me, in some measure, the light of his everlasting countenance, has shed serenity into my soul, and thereby given a pledge of his love. And although I have grievously backslidden from him, have broken my vows, and defiled my heart, he has not taken from me his loving kindness, but sent his word and healed me; lifted me out of the mire, and put a song of triumph into my mouth. He has also heard my prayer, has stooped down from heaven—his dwelling-place—and delivered me from temptation, when I was unable to resist. He has promised me the victory over the enemies of my peace, and has done all this without distracting me with his terrors. He has mercifully refused my unadvised petition to know the terrors of his law, and has drawn me with the cords of love. I adore his sovereignty, and thank him for his tenderness. What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me? I will take the cup of salvation, and will call upon the name of the Lord; I will pay my vows to the Lord.

"I here renew all my former engagements to be his. I take God to be my God in Christ, Jesus to be my Saviour, and the Holy Spirit to be my guide and comforter. I vow myself away to the Lord, and am no longer my own. I dedicate myself to his service in the ministry of his Son. I break my league with hell. Poor is the offering, but Jesus has commanded it. 'My son, give me thine heart;' and I know he will not refuse it. Amen! 'Tis the voluntary, 'tis the joyous act of my soul. Amen! Amen!

"JOHN M. MASON.

"Dear Redeemer, I desire to rest upon thee as the Lord my righteousness, and the Lord my strength. Give me strength to fulfil my vows, to follow thee in all the ways of new obedience; to trample temptations under foot, particularly the sin that doth so easily beset me, and to surmount all the difficulties (they are many and great) which oppose my progress."

"THURSDAY, April 14th, 1791. I think I never found my heart in a worse frame than on this day, a day, too, of fasting, as a preparation for celebrating the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Instead of that solemnity, tenderness, humility, contrition, which are peculiarly adapted to a day of fasting and prayer, my heart was unconcerned, hard, proud, and unfeeling; darkness, and listlessness, and deadness filled my soul. I could neither meditate, nor pray, nor examine myself, nor shed one tear for sin. So stupid was I that even Jesus and his everlasting love made little impression on me. I could not so much as exert myself. A drowsiness seized my animal frame, and stifled every pious reflection. I attended public service, returned and attempted to pour out my heart before the Lord. 'Twas no better. He shut my mouth, and I could scarcely utter a word. Drowsiness came again over me; I laid down my head to sleep, when these words were rung into my ears, as with a voice from the upper sanctuary, 'Awake, O thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.' I had often heard, often read, often repeated these words before, but never did they come with such power. I rose up; my drowsiness vanished; my heart melted into tenderness; my bands were loosed; I got liberty to unbosom myself to my Heavenly Father. I saw once more the beauty and glory of Christ and his salvation; and I was enabled once more to roll my soul upon him. Happy moment! Adorable sovereignty! 'The Lord is my portion, saith my soul, therefore will I wait for him.'"

CHAPTER IV.

1791–1792.

STUDIES AT EDINBURGH.

Reflections on going—Written counsel from his Father—Received by his uncle—Letter to his sister Margaretta—Deep religious anxiety—Letter to Mr. John B. Johnson—His Father's illness and death—Letter to his step-mother—Extract from his diary—Reputation at the University—Testimony of Dr. A. Hunter—Of Dr. John Erskine.

After studying nearly two years with his father, it was determined that Mr. Mason should further pursue his professional education in Scotland. A step so important could not be approached by him without feelings of peculiar interest, and was well calculated to awaken the most serious reflections. Accordingly we find, from a diary which he kept at this period, what special pains he took to prepare himself for the undertaking:—

"April 25, 1791. In the prospect of leaving my native country and going among strangers, I set apart this morning for solemn fasting, humiliation, and prayer. In all extraordinary steps God should be extraordinarily acknowledged; and he has given us reason to believe that such acknowledgments shall not be in vain. My heart was indeed very unfit for so serious work. All the corruptions that are there rose to resist, and render the exercise irksome. Satan plied hard with his temptations to draw my mind away from my duty. I was enabled, however, to go through it, though with great weakness and deadness. And, having reviewed my past life, I confessed to God my aggravated guilt. I besought pardon for the righteousness of the dear Redeemer. Having also examined my Christian exercises and my present disposition, I do find, and think I am warranted, from the Divine Word, to say, that I am not what I once was; that though I cannot distinctly tell the several steps by which the Holy Spirit wrought in my soul the work of faith, yet I do know that there has been effected a great and important change in my ruling principles; that this change could not have been produced by any human means, but was brought about by the agency of the blessed Spirit. In consequence of this change, my eyes are fixed on Christ. I wish for no other Saviour—no other portion. Having put the world, with all its riches, honours, pleasures, and everything else that it has, or can have, on one side; and, on the other, a crucified, a despised, a persecuted Jesus, with poverty, contempt, reproach, and all other afflictions for his name, my soul, without a hesitating emotion, cries, None but Christ, none but Christ! The die is cast; Jesus, my beloved, is mine, and I am his! I can go to God as my reconciled God in him, and am conscious that he is my God forever, and will be my guide even unto death. Jesus has said: 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.' He told me so at his own table (April 17th), he tells me so now, and shall I not trust him? I am pleased with his salvation. I wish to go out of myself into him, to receive daily of his fulness, and grace for grace. I wish never to separate from him the promises of the Gospel, but in applying them for my comfort and consolation, always to embrace Christ in the promises as their substance. I wish to live by faith upon him, and to be conformed to his divine image, by growing in grace; and, however slow my progress, blessed be God, I do feel my temper and affections somewhat more sanctified. I feel that, through Christ strengthening me, I do gain more frequent victories than formerly, over my corruptions; if at any time they prove too strong for me, I cannot rest till I flee to the blood of sprinkling, and embrace Christ anew.

"I believe, also, that the Lord Jesus has called me to serve him in the ministry of the Gospel; and, therefore, though difficulties, to my reason, insurmountable, stand in my way, and I cannot see how they are to be removed, yet I will go forward. His faithfulness is pledged to bear me through, and therefore I look from my difficulties to Christ. Though far above my strength, yet he has an arm that is full of power; and, did I not think that he will support me, I would not advance one step farther, but would throw aside my studies, and not attempt to carry a mountain which would crush me."

In sending his son to Scotland, Dr. Mason's aim doubtless was, not only higher accomplishments in his profession, but a wider range of general knowledge, and such an acquaintance with cultivated and Christian society abroad, as might contribute to his future usefulness. Such views unite with parental solicitude and wisdom in a paper with which the young man was furnished on embarking. This paper, moreover, shows not a little of what he himself was who wrote it—his own theory and practice in the sacred ministry—and the maxims and model on which the character of his son was formed. A subsequent event also gave peculiar emphasis and force to one passage in the communication, and rendered it almost prophetic. The paper follows:—

TO MR. JOHN M. MASON.

NEW YORK, April 27, 1791.

As you are about to leave your native land for some time, and perhaps I may never see your face again in this world, a sense of duty and tender regard for you, impel me to give you a few advices, which by the blessing of God will be useful to you in future life.

I wish you to have the air and address of a gentleman; not of an affected, but a real gentleman, in whose character, good sense, sincerity, discretion, affability, condescension, an obliging temper, and easy behaviour, are principal traits.

Go freely into every respectable company when you can be introduced with propriety, and esteem such an introduction into large and mixed companies a very great favour. Be modest and attentive in company. Equally avoid loquacity and silence. Beware of impertinent staring, but keep an open countenance. Do not flatly contradict any person present, nor be engaged in angry controversy. Never speak to the disadvantage of any absent person; this would be mean, ungenerous, impolite, wicked. Be very attentive to ladies, who will give a polish to your manners. Every part of your conversation towards them should be marked with the most refined delicacy. Do not repeat any little stories or anecdotes, but such as you have reason to think none present may be supposed to be acquainted with, but take notice of such as are mentioned by others, even of such as you know, without giving any hint that you have heard of them before. Respectfully turn your face to any person you speak to, or who speaks to you. Be fond of instructive conversation, but do not altogether disregard small-talk, some proportion of which is rendered necessary by the present state of society. Never give a decisive opinion about anything in the presence of your superiors, without pressing necessity; which will seldom happen. Say little about yourself, and never vex your friends with gloomy narratives about your little ailments. Be always cheerful, but be always grave. Avoid loud laughter and smile gracefully. Be careful not to hurt the feelings of any person present. If you begin to speak about anything, and the company do not take notice of you, do not make a second attempt unless you are desired.

While in Britain, say little about your own country. Speak respectfully of the British government, avoid controversy about the late contest between Britain and the United States, and do not directly or indirectly advise mechanics or farmers to leave the British dominions.

Accommodate yourself to the habits of people, and their way of living, in any place you may visit. Do not discover any niceness of palate, but make the best of homely fare. Plain people do not study cookery, and you will hurt them much by showing any contempt of the provision they may set before you. Be not noisy when you stop at a tavern, be polite to the landlord and servants; a real gentleman gives little trouble; he is easily pleased.

Carefully observe the state of society, the customs and manners, the progress or decline of religion, or of the arts and sciences, in any place to which providence may lead you. Be very curious. Study mankind wherever you go.

I need not guard you against vulgar companions, but be very kind to pious poor people and converse familiarly with them. Have few intimate friends, and be nice in choosing them. Draw a narrow circle enclosing some about your own age, some of middle, and some of old age, and give the preference to those who are most eminent in piety, learning, and politeness. Depend most upon the advices which are the dictates of experience.

Have stated times for visiting your friends, unless they are in affliction. Let your complimental visits be always affectionate and short. Never suffer your presence to be painful to any person.

Be faithful to your friends. Be a punctual correspondent; keep secrets; be affable to all men. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good, praying for and seeking opportunities to promote the happiness of all who injure you.

Never give unnecessary trouble to any family where you may lodge. Be polite to children.and servants. Observe family rules, and beware of being abroad at a late hour.

Consider manly exercise as an important duty in which you may serve God. This will contribute much to the preservation of your health, and will defend you against hypochondriac affections, which destroy the spring of animal spirits, and make one useless and ridiculous.

These things deserve your attention, but the following advices are of much more importance:—

Keep your eye constantly on the state of your soul, the principles which govern your conduct, and the great realities of Eternity, some of which will soon be the objects of your experience. To be a Christian, and to live as a Christian, is the sum of your happiness and of your duty.

Never neglect the reading of the Holy Scriptures in the manner to which you have been accustomed. Be attentive to every part of your Bible, especially to the Pentateuch, the Psalms, the Proverbs of Solomon, the Prophecies of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zachariah, and the books of the New Testament. Make short annotations on what you read. Mark those texts which touch your heart, and while the impressions of them are fresh, prepare schemes of discourses upon them.

Be very attentive to the system used in the University, and while you read it, have Turrictine's Institution, and the Usher, and Brown's Bodies of Divinity open before you.

Be very exact in studying the Deistical, Socinian, and Arminian Controversies. Let it be your principal care to be able to state the doctrines of religion in a simple and perspicuous manner; this you will find to be the most effectual means of enervating objections, and opposing error. Do not embarrass yourself with a great variety of systems, nor with speculations about things which cannot be understood in this world, and perhaps will remain mysteries in the world to come. Make as great progress as possible in your systematical reading during the first year after your arrival in Scotland, and review what you shall have read in the second. Study systems in a practical manner. Remember that you are deeply interested in every doctrine of Christianity, and that even Divinity will be useless to your own soul, and the souls of others, if it is considered only as an object of speculation.

In your first year at Edinburgh, prepare twelve short, practical sermons, twenty in the second.

Observe the method of the ablest, the most pious and accurate preachers. Write the substance of their discourses when you are at home; but beware of a servile imitation of any preacher.

Be very intent on the study of the Hebrew language, for three or four months, and make yourself well acquainted with its grammar. When you shall be able to understand the Hebrew Scriptures with some ease I wish you to attend as the professor directs to the Arabic, Syriac, and Chaldaic, especially the Arabic, as much at least as will enable you to make progress in the study of them, after you shall leave the University. While you are engaged in these exercises, it will be proper to read Leusdeni Philologus.

Do not however, neglect the Latin, Greek, and French languages. Be a classical critic. Read some of Plato's works, and make notes on what you read. In a particular manner attend to the purity of your own language. Lay in a store of classical words, that you may be able to express your sentiments on any subject, and on any occasion, with propriety and ease. In order to do this, labour to have clear ideas of things. Endeavour to acquire the habit of speaking in a plain, neat, unaffected style. Avoid bombast and vulgarity. Seldom let the proud monosyllable I, have the place in your compositions or discourses. Accustom yourself to read aloud, as one of the best means to fit you for public speaking. Be accurate in all your compositions.

Read with great care the Fathers of the three first centuries, and the Apostolical Constitutions. In these you will find many jewels, mixed with much rubbish. Observe the exposition they give of the Scriptures and what views they had of the doctrine of the Trinity, and of the person and office of the Redeemer. Write your remarks upon them; this will save much time in the future periods of life.

Make much use of Prideaux Connections. Be very exact in reading the history of the Church, till you come to the destruction of the Exarchate of Ravenna. Read with attention, but not with explicit faith, the Ecclesiastical Histories of Eusebius, Socrates, Evagrius, Mosheim, and Spanheim, to which you may add Sigonius de regno Italiæ, de Occidentali Imperio, and Ockley's History of the Saracens.

As a relief from severe study read some books of rational amusement, and make the tour of the world, in some short and well written General Geography.

That you may not fall into confusion, and give unnecessary fatigue to your mind, make a prudent distribution of your time. If you sleep only seven hours in one day, you will have seventeenhours for devotion, for study, and for exercise. Let me again recommend to you the strictest attention to exer cise. It may sometimes be necessary to lay aside study for a week or two, and to make an excursion into the country on horseback.

Let it be your care to acquire authority over your own mind, that with ease you may be able to apply yourself to any branch of study.

If God shall be pleased to put you into the ministry, prepare your discourses with great accuracy. Let this be the principal business of the morning of every day. Do not put it off till the end of the week. This would be to trifle with the Gospel and the souls of men; persevere in accurate preparation till the 40th or 45th year of your age. Superficial study and writing, in youth, make a poor old man. Be not however a slave to your compositions; exercise, but do not overcharge your memory. Go to the pulpit so far possessed of your notes, as to be able to speak with dignity, propriety, and ease.

Fill your discourses with useful matter. A multitude of words without sentiments, or with sentiments not adapted to the pulpit, insult a grave worshipping assembly. Let the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel be your principal subjects. Do not however neglect morality, but see that you enforce it chiefly by arguments drawn from redeeming grace. Give faith and obedience their proper places. Reason closely, but with as little appearance of reasoning as is possible for you: give a practical turn to your arguments, and never abuse those who are of a contrary opinion.

Have short introductions. State the sense and connexion of the text with great precision. Let your method be natural, arising out of the subject. Be concise in the doctrinal part, that you may not be hurried in the application. Never depart wantonly from our translation, and if at any time you shall find it necessary to alter it, do it with great modesty, and without amusing the hearers with Latin, Greek, or Hebrew words. Do not meddle with the exposition of the Scriptures, which we commonly call lecturing, for two years at least after you have appeared in a public character. Meanwhile prepare yourself for it, by a diligent reading, and close attention to the connexions of Scripture. When you begin it, select such passages as have a peculiar fitness for fixing impressions upon the consciences of the hearers. Let this be your practice for one year. After that you may expound a chapter, or a book, as you shall think will be most for edification.

Endeavour to acquire the command of your voice. Never speak louder than is necessary, unless some Divine impulse lay a necessity upon you. Screaming and bawling disgrace the pulpit. Despise theatrical airs. Let your actions be easy and natural. Hate affectation.

Rise above the frowns and applause of men. Consider your hearers as your fellow sinners, and your fellow mortals, and realize the presence of the searcher of hearts. Be serious and pointed, and you will command attention. Preach to yourself, and you will preach well to others.

Often read the Epistles to Timothy and Titus. Travail as in birth till Christ be formed in souls.

When settled in a congregation, begin your ministry with great modesty, affection, and faithfulness. The first days of a man's ministry have frequently been found to be his best days. Endeavour to grow, that your profiting may appear to all.

Be very circumspect in your life. Let your conversation on all occasions proclaim the sincerity of your heart, and exemplify the salutary tendencies of the doctrine you deliver to others.

Be very solemn in speaking to persons who desire baptism for their children, or admission to the Lord's Supper; and never dispense those privileges to any, without the advice of your Session.

Consider that faithfulness in catechising young people, who, are the hope of the Church, and visiting the poor and the afflicted are some of the most important duties that will be incumbent upon you.

Never attach yourself to any party in your congregation, nor suffer any differences among the people to come before the Session till every previous means of composing them shall fail. Whatever unfavourable opinion you may have of any of your hearers, keep it locked up in your own mind. If any of them shall treat you in an unbecoming manner, take no notice of it, but pray for them, and do your duty to them, as though they had not displeased you. Discourage tale bearers, and never point your discourses at individuals.

As the general interests of religion are much influenced by judicial proceedings, let it now be your care to prepare yourself for acting your part therein. Attend the meetings of the General Assembly, the Commission of the Assembly, Synods, and Presbyteries of the National Church, and also the Judicatories of the Seceders, as you shall have opportunity. Consider Church discipline as an important subject of study. Buy the Acts of the General Assembly and the Acts of the Synod of Dort; you have the Acts of the National Synod of France in the Library. When you shall be called to act as a member of a Church Judicatory, do not speak often, nor make long speeches, but be decisive when you speak. When differences happen among ministers, be a peace-maker. Never be a partyman. Durham on Scandal will contribute much to make you a good disciplinarian.

Thus I have given you a few advices. I wish my time had permitted me to polish and extend them. Receive them as they are. They are an effusion of the heart of an affectionate parent. More will be occasionally sent to you, if life and health are preserved.

I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace; may His good spirit instruct you, and you will be happily directed. Your best interests are near the heart of your father,

JOHN MASON.

Read these advices once a month, carefully preserve them as a memorial of me. They may be of use to you, even in old age. Don't be discouraged when so much work is cut out for you. Method, perseverance, due exercise, and, above all, Divine assistance, will enable you to do much more, with great ease.

J. M.

He arrived in Scotland early in the summer of 1791, and on reaching Edinburgh was invited to the house of his uncle, Ebenezer Mason, a very respectable merchant of that city, from whom he ever received strong proofs of affection, and the best acts of friendship, and who in turn was exceedingly loved and revered by his nephew.

But few written memorials of this interesting period have been preserved. The fragments of diary and correspondence, which have come down to us, do little but impress us with the value of what we have lost. In addition to professional association, he formed acquaintance with some persons who were ornaments of literature in a place and an age of literary eminence, and was admitted to such society as both excites and feeds desires for improvement. He placed a high value upon the friendship of the Rev. Dr. John Erskine; as also upon the Lectures of Professor Dugald Stewart, whom he considered one of the most eloquent speakers that he ever heard.

His earliest letter from Scotland, that has been preserved, is addressed to his sister Margaretta:—

Edinburgh, July 23, 1791.

My Dear Sister: It will give you pleasure to hear (as you must already have heard from the letter I wrote to papa), that I landed in good health, and good spirits. You will be curious to know next (for young ladies are always curious), what kind of a journey I made to Edinburgh, and what adventures I met with on the road. To tell the truth, I jogged on, as I do in most of my peregrinations, very quietly; and saw but little, except in the towns, to interest an ordinary traveller. Variety indeed there was; but it was the variety of hills and valleys, rocks and ponds, of sunshine and rain. However, a person of romantic disposition would not have been at a loss for subjects to exercise his imagination. I was musing, with some degree of vexation on the vast difference of ranks in this country, and the haughty demeanour of titled petulance, when my mind was relieved by adverting to a very novel scene, in which familiar simplicity and condescending sociality were carried as far as they can well be carried. Near a rock by the wayside, stood a low thatched cottage. The cheerfulness and healthy appearance of some children at the door drew my notice. I observed the cottage divided into two apartments. One of these was occupied by the mistress of the family, her children, the dog and cat, and a division of the fowls. The other was possessed by the rest of the fowls and the family cow. Perhaps I may err in a circumstance or two, but the fact is substantially as you have it. Well, thought I, mankind will always be in extremes. If some of the noble were mixed with such plebeian ingredients, the compound would form a happy medium for common life.

So much for the journey. I had heard a great deal about Scotch reserve and austerity; but should do the people injustice, were I not to say, that it is impossible for me to be treated by strangers with more attention, friendship and affection, than I have experienced, and still experience from them.

This kindness in a foreign land, is not the least of the mercies with which God has favoured us. Oh, my sister, how small are our returns of gratitude for that goodness which has followed us from our birth till this moment! Long have we been objects of God's paternal care. He has heaped his blessings upon us; He has offered to us a great salvation; He has borne with our rebellions, and has not caused His wrath to smoke against us; and He still proclaims peace and pardon through the blood of Jesus. May we not withhold from Him the returns which He asks!

Your affectionate brother,

JNO. M. MASON.

During his sojourn at his uncle's, he was frequently the subject of very distressing apprehensions respecting his own spiritual state and prospects. Frequently was he heard in his retired chamber to be engaged in the deepest exercises of mind under the fear of having committed the unpardonable sin. The doctrine of election likewise, under an erroneous view of it, as he afterwards learned, caused him the greatest distress. One still living remembers his walking the floor of his room and wringing his hands in misery. Some of the anguish which at such times he suffered, as well as the manner in which at times he emerged from the gloom, is indicated by such parts of his diary as here follow:—

"EDINBURGH, August 8th, 1791.

"There have been strange vicissitudes in my spiritual state since I last wrote the condition of my mind. Strange assaults of temptation, though more of the alluring, than of the terrifying kind—strange coldness and deadness of heart in religious exercises—strange risings of corruption against the holy law of God—strange alienation of affection from Him—strange backsliding in practice—strange indifference to God's blessed word—strange callousness of conscience—strange insensibility to the wonders of redeeming love—and strange stoops of sovereign grace in reclaiming me again. Oh, what a heart is mine! how full of all uncleanness! how prone to depart from the living God! Surely, it is nothing but Almighty grace that keeps me from becoming a downright apostate! And, oh! let me sing the honours of that love which has once more touched my heart!

"I was engaged in reading an account of the conversion of Mr. Sherriff—but ah! what pangs did I feel! My very soul had like to have burst. I could do little more than groan and weep, all the time I was reading it. I know not why it should be so. God's dealings are sovereign, and He handles one sinner very differently from another; but the views which Mr. S. had of the deceitfulness and wickedness of his own heart—and of the glory and fulness of the exalted Saviour, his holy life, his evangelical frame—his warm love to the souls of men, and ardent zeal for the honour of Christ, shed through me a freezing horror, lest I should be found a self-deceiver. I finished the narrative—I rose from my seat—and in an agony of grief and fear, sobbed till I could scarcely breathe. Wrung with anguish, I walked across my room, and many distressing thoughts crowded into my mind. I attempted to pour out my complaint in prayer, but my mouth was shut—I was dismally apprehensive that all was not right with me—that there was some corner of my heart yet full of abominations unseen and unforgiven. I cast myself prostrate on my face before the throne of God, unable to utter a single petition. A voice seemed to say to my soul, 'Arise, and stand upon thy feet, and it shall be told thee what thou shalt do.' I immediately arose, and felt a strong inclination to read a part of my Bible—met with that passage, 'A bruised reed will he not break, and smoking flax will he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.' Sweet, heavenly words! I started in transport—I exclaimed, 'Then he is *my* Saviour! he is assuredly my Saviour!' Oh, how beautiful was Jesus Christ in all his offices! I clearly saw that He must be the eternal God, or it is in vain to hope in him. I saw that I cannot be saved without the Holy Spirit's enabling me to receive him, in all his offices. I saw, I see, that unconnected with him, the sweetest, richest promises of the Gospel are dry and cheerless; but connected with him, O, how savory, how consolatory, how refreshing! I find my soul pointing towards him, and turning with disgust, with shame, with hatred, with horror, from all sin.

"SEPTEMBER 22d. The Christian life is well compared to a warfare! Oh, how hard a warfare! It is one of the sovereign dispensations of God's providence, by which he permits his people to be assaulted with the fiercest attacks, directly after the most comfortable frame. I was meditating with great delight on that sweet passage, 'Ye have an unction from the Holy One;' but never did corruptions more rage than shortly after this heavenly exercise —my soul almost sunk under their power. My feet well nigh slipped. I am but just learning the meaning of what the Redeemer long ago told me, *that Satan had desired to have me, that he might sift me as wheat.* No mortal can tell the depths of iniquity which are in my heart—how prone I am to depart from the living God.. O! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death? I know not why the Lord leaves me to be thus tossed with temptation, unless it be to try me in the fire of affliction—to lead me through much tribulation, and thus make me to his people a son of consolation, or he may design to punish my unholiness of heart, and untenderness of life—he may be forming me for sanctuary service, by making me acquainted with my own depravity, and the wiles of the Devil. He certainly means to embitter sin to me—to keep me closer to himself—to exalt precious Christ and free grace in my estimation—and to let me see the value of his paternal care. If he did not keep under me the everlasting arms, what would become of my soul? Free grace! Let me shout its honours! It must be sovereign indeed, or it would never have fixed on me. But, Lord, thy servant is an earthen vessel, and cannot stand such rude shocks. Yet I bless the glorious Saviour that I have found him as good as his word, *I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.* He has curbed the roaring lion—he has hushed the troubled sea—and still the Lord is my portion, saith my soul. I have now an additional motive to love him, for he hath heard my prayer—and, truly, it is good to wait for him. I hope yet to renew my strength, to mount up with wings as an eagle—to be more than a conqueror through him that loveth me. Oh, who can tell the privilege of going to the throne of grace, but they whose fainting spirits have been supported by the help which their God has sent in answer to their cry, from His holy hill? Praised, forever praised, be his name! Though I be less than the least of all saints, I will go in his strength; I will make mention of his righteousness. His word shall be my joy in the house of my pilgrimage!"

"November 10th. This day being set apart as a day of fasting and humiliation previously to celebrating the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, in the churches of Edinburgh, I thought it would not be improper to embrace the opportunity of observing a part of it, in that way, on a private account.

"Two reasons strongly urged this step—the awful power of indwelling sin joined to the violent temptations of Satan; and the prospect of commencing, in a few days, my theological studies at the Divinity Hall.

"It is not more than two or three weeks since the Lord was pleased to visit me with a gentle chastisement. He soon removed his hand and restored me to health. But, ah! where has been my gratitude? Where the sanctification of my trouble? Instead of serving with more holiness and zeal the God of my mercies, my heart has been more hard and obstinate; my conversation more untender. Surely the Scripture says true, in pronouncing the heart of man to be 'deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.' All within me was dark, and dreary and horrible. And to complete the judgment, Satan was let loose upon me. He had been striving hard to shake my faith in that all-important doctrine, the supreme divinity of the Lord Christ. The question has been shot into my mind, and diffused through it a freezing horror—What if I be mistaken? what if Jesus Christ is but a man? Where then are all my hopes for eternity? But, blessed be Jehovah, he has not cast me off, nor permitted me to be a prey to the lion's teeth. Though Satan has tried more than once to make me a Socinian, a Deist, an Atheist, Jesus had compassion on me, and succoured me in the critical moment. I can see, indeed, several just reasons for which he may have permitted the adversary of my peace to have thus distressed me, such as, sporting with temptations. Although I have found, by experience, the bitterness of sin; and know how the Devil cheats those who listen to his suggestions; and although the word of life held up its authority, and conscience cried out against my rebellion; yet I was too regardless of both.

"2. A partiality to favourite lusts. O God! how have these Canaanites thrust thorns into my eyes, and daggers into my heart, and yet how have I cherished them!

"3. Listlessness, and indifference, and formality in the service of God.

"4. Unfrequent messages to the throne of grace, leaning too much upon my own understanding, and my own strength.

"5. Unfaithfulness to my covenant-vows. How often have I sworn to be the Lord's, and yet acted as though I had never professed His name! I have promised, and broken my promise—and promised again, and again broken it; and thus I have gone on promising and breaking my promise alternately. The Lord forgive my atrocious perfidy!

"6. Above all, the great sin of neglecting to improve Jesus Christ—of looking too much at myself, and at the law, and so little at his sin-crucifying cross. Adorable Jesus, I have now peculiar need of Thy kind interposition, for I am about to be enrolled as one who intends not to preach an unknown Saviour! Let me not hold the torch of thy Word by showing others the way to the gate of heaven, while that gate shall be shut upon myself! Let me not double my damnation, by proclaiming peace and pardon through the blood of Jesus, while I am in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity! Jesus, I throw myself upon thee, and hang my soul on thy promise, 'Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.'"

"NOVEMBER, 12th, 1791. Truly God is a sovereign God. I have found him so, in all his dealings with me. He smites with the rod of his chastisements, and visits with the light of his countenance as he pleases. But, oh! his own time is the best time, and he suits his providence, in adorable wisdom, to the necessities of his people. What more gracious, what more suitable, than to testify his love to me, after I have been long harassed with temptation, tossed by corruption, dragged from the path of his commandments, and almost inclined to believe that he had given me up to the lusts of my own heart? I admire his leading me to hear this day, contrary to my intentions, Mr. Black, one of his faithful servants. He preached from Heb. ii. 10: 'For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect, through suffering.' How strongly appeared to my mind the Deity of Jesus! Surely he is God, for who but Jehovah could bear the weight of Jehovah's wrath? Precious, invaluable truth! It is the life of my soul. But I am to bless God for showing me Jesus Christ, not only as an almighty Saviour, but as my Saviour. How sweet—how inexpressibly sweet, were to me the consolations of his Spirit! 'Fear not,' said he, 'I am *thy* God'—'I never said to the sons of Jacob, Seek ye my face in vain—I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee—I give unto thee eternal life, and none shall pluck thee out of my hand. For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath, I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy upon thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.'—Is. liv. 7, 8. O, how lovely was Christ; how rich his fulness; how free his grace! Much has been said of him, but the half was not told me. I know whom I have believed, and that he is able to keep what I have committed to him. He has answered my fervent prayer to have my interest in the blessings of his purchase manifested to my own soul before I enter formally upon theological studies."

A letter dated January 24, 1792, to his friend John B. Johnson, (afterwards a distinguished Minister of the Reformed Dutch Church, at Albany, N. Y.), is not without considerable interest. It shows what patriotic feelings mingled with his religious sentiments; it indicates hopes respecting the results of the French Revolution, which he was compelled by subsequent developments to relinquish, and such as were entertained by many others who afterwards felt sadly disappointed; and at the close, touches very delicately upon a tender topic, which will be readily understood by all the friends of his family. After two pages of playful and confidential pleasantry, he remarks:—

I wished to divert you a little, but it has been heavy work. My spirits are very low at present. This you can testify is not commonly the case. They have been depressed by the sad intelligence of our defeat by the Indians: six hundred men and forty-four officers! The reflection wrings my heart. The weapon that sheds the blood of my countrymen, pierces my own bosom.

The two blows we have received are a punishment for our ingratitude and pride. God first spoke to us in the mild accents of mercy; he then spoke by an army of flies which he ordered to march through our land, and cut down the staff of life. He gave us a respite, but we heard not his voice. He now addresses us in the thunder of a desolating war. He has lifted his scourge—he has smitten us twice—blood has followed each stroke, and more the second than the first. When will Americans listen? When will they be humbled? When will they turn to the Lord from whom they have deeply revolted? Oh, America, America! how deep is thy guilt! Every one of her citizens should ask what share have I had in the national iniquity? Individuals compose the nation, and with individuals repentance must begin.

As a philanthropist, you will rejoice in the prosperity of the French. The storm which threatened to burst upon them will vanish, I hope, in smoke. Should the neighbouring princes be mad enough to attack them, revolutions in their own kingdoms will probably be the consequence. I wish and pray, that the flame of liberty *may*, and I believe it *will*, spread till it kindle one general conflagration, and every fragment of despotism shiver in the blaze!

I would gladly attend to other important parts of your letter, but am unable to do it now. Remember me respectfully to all who make inquiries, particularly to our good friend in Maiden Lane. You did not tell me, an literas ostendisti, quas ostenderes rogavi. Certe equidem mecum reputavi, initia N. L. nominis atque cognominis, satis esse clara, non solum ad eam, quam innuebam, quasi digito, indicandam; sed ad multo pleura, quám expressa erant, dilucidè explicanda.

Judge whether I have been genteelly treated: nine or ten letters to which I expected answers have never been noticed. I am happy, however, dear Johnson, that in the sweet confidence of reciprocal friendship, I can subscribe myself, *yours* most affectionately.

J. M. MASON.

It was the intention of his father, that, to an intimate acquaintance with the Hebrew language, should be added an acquaintance with its cognates, the Syriac and Arabic; and that for this purpose, after finishing his course in Scotland, he should avail himself of the best advantages afforded by institutions on the Continent. This plan, however, was abandoned in consequence of an event which hastened his return home.

The first intimation which he received of the precarious condition of his father's health, was contained in the following letter. We find it with this filial endorsement: "The *last* letter of a father, such as few have the happiness of enjoying, written twenty-five days before his decease, on the 19th April, 1792." The gentleman referred to in the first sentence was the British Consul, a neighbour and friend of its author.

TO MR. JOHN M. MASON, EDINBURGH

New York March, 24, 1792.

My dear Boy: I sent you a letter by the last packet which, having been enclosed in Sir John Temple's dispatches, I hope you received free. In the first part of that letter there were several hints, which no doubt gave you pain, though they proceeded from the heart of an affectionate father. I retract all these, and wish you to be easy in your mind. Your letters by Captain Martin made us all very happy. From your way of writing about some leading clerical characters, I infer that you have not lost your relish for the good old way. This makes my heart glad. Dr. Erskine's account of you to Dr. Rodgers, and even the Principal's account to Sir John Temple, increased our joy. Speak sparingly at Edinburgh about those gentlemen, who appear to you to be the reverse of what they should be.

My indisposition, of which I gave you a hint in my last, still remains, and is very obstinate. I may soon be called from this world, and I have nothing to comfort me in the prospect of such an event, but that gospel which I preached to others. Though I should recover the present shock, I fear my constitution will be so broken that I will not be able to do much in public works. I must, therefore, drop all the plans which I had projected for your further improvement in Europe, and earnestly request you to return with Captain Martin in the fall, or sooner if you can, in any vessel bound for this or a neighbouring port. To enforce this request, it is proper to inform you that the corporation of the church, who have just now left me, concur therein, and that probably a letter will soon come to you from the Session. You are, therefore, my son, in very critical circumstances, but God will direct and assist you.

While you are in Scotland be as diligent as justice to your health will permit you. Bring with you University certificates, and if you can decently procure general recommendations from Dr. Erskine, Mr. Randall, and other respectable persons, they will be of use to you. It will not be improper to take out a 'Master's Degree' at Edinburgh. You may expect a remittance of about £30 sterling by Captain Martin. This is all that can be done for you at present. But if you should be pinched in preparing for, and paying your passage, you may procure a few pounds from your uncle or some other friend, which shall be faithfully repaid. I wish I had it in my power to enable you to purchase more books, especially those of Christian antiquity. Dr. Erskine will assist you in preparing a catalogue. Do as much in the Hebrew as you can, and I wish you may be able at least to read the Syriac and Arabic, and to make some use of the lexicons. Hasten home, my son, and may the Lord make you a workman who needeth not to be ashamed! Prepare a few solemn and substantial practical discourses, and also a popular sermon, and an exegesis on any important head of divinity, to be delivered at the Presbytery upon your arrival here. Your professor will point out to you the form of such presbyterial exercises. Should I be removed before you arrive, lose no time, but after refreshing yourself, and seeing your friends, immediately set out for Salem, where a presbytery may be constituted by Messrs. Proudfit and Dunlap, for the purpose of licensing you. The minds of these gentlemen will be prepared for this. Devote all the time you can to reading books of practical divinity, Boston, Erskine, Harvey, the Marrow of Modern Divinity, and the Synod's Catechism. Your mamma and sisters are well, and long to see you. God bless you, my dear child! Still your affectionate father,

JOHN MASON.

TO MR. EBENEZER MASON.

My Dear Brother: I am so exhausted that I can scarcely write a few lines to you. I am under the hand of God, who alone knows his designs respecting me. I would rely upon that grace which I have long preached to others. Accept my hearty thanks for your kindness to John. The Lord reward you and bless you with all spiritual blessings! My love to your consort, to whom I wish the best of blessings.

Your affectionate brother,
JOHN MASON.

Less than a month after this, the decease of his father took place. His feelings on the occasion were immediately expressed in a letter to his beloved step-mother:—

TO MRS. SARAH MASON.

EDINBURGH, June 2d, 1792.

MY DEAR MOTHER: I received yesterday, the letter which brought the dreaded intelligence of that sore affliction with which our God has been pleased to visit us. From former letters, indeed, I expected nothing else; but no expectation can prevent such a blow from being severely felt. And is my father, my much beloved father, gone? I own the Providence is to me most mysterious. That I should go so far from home for the purpose of fitting myself for more extensive usefulness—that I should have my plan of study arranged—the train laid for prosecuting it—should just have begun fairly to follow it—should have the most flattering prospect before me,—and should have them all blasted in a moment! That God should strike from under me the prop of my youth, at the very season when I most need him—that he should call me, as I plainly see he does, to public work, when I am so little qualified for it; and am such a dwarf in the divine life! This, indeed, is one of his strange works. But though it is wondrous in our eyes, yet let us remember, it is the doing of the Lord. O, for resignation to the divine will! Let us say with David, 'We will be dumb, we will not open our mouths, because thou didst it.' Our God chastises us. 'O! our Father, whom have we in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth whom we desire besides thee. Our flesh and our hearts may fail, but God is the strength of our hearts, and our portion forever.' Dear mother, when I look at the blank which is made in our little family, and at the weighty duties which lie before me, I find support in nothing but the promises of the everlasting covenant; and these promises, I trust, are also your support and consolation. A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widow, is God in his habitation. Thy maker is thy husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name. Widows and orphans are his pecular eare. And is he not better than any other husband, or father? Whatever sense may say, faith will say, yes. Let us then cast our burden upon the Lord: it is indeed a heavy one, and therefore we have the more need to roll it upon him; heavy as it is, eternal truth hath sworn to sustain both it and us.

Dearest mother: since God has taken from us my revered father, let us, whom he has left behind, be more tenderly affectionate to one another. You have been more than a mother to me; and I should be worse than ungrateful, were it not one of my first and most anxious cares to make up to you, as far as I can, the loss of my father—to alleviate all your sorrows, and increase all your comforts. This world is at best but a vale of tears. Let us, therefore, study to strengthen each other in the good ways of God. Let our conversation be in heaven, so that when our Lord shall call us hence, we may have nothing to do but to die, and to re-join, in His everlasting rest, those dear friends who have gone before us.

My heart warms with gratitude to those who have shown any attention to my father. Thank such of them as you may see, in my name. I will gladly thank them in person when Providence shall restore me to my country and friends.

Perfectly convinced that an immediate return to America is my indispensable duty, I shall make no delay; but, if the Lord permit, will sail with Capt. Martin, who is hourly expected.

Present my affectionate compliments to all our relations and friends; and believe me, dear mother, that everything that concerns your happiness lies very near the heart of

Your affectionate son,

JOHN M. MASON.

The exercises of his mind at this juncture may be further seen in the following extract from his diary:—

"JUNE 5, 1792. The ways of God are indeed in the deep, and his footsteps are not known. The whole course of his providence towards me has been marked with sovereignty, and often with mystery. Many times he has sorely chastised me, but his hand now lies heavier upon me than ever before. He took from me, some years ago, an affectionate and pious mother; and he has now taken from me a father—one amongst the most valuable that ever blessed a son. How unsearchable are his judgments! He has stricken from under me the prop of my youth at the very period when I most need his support. He has blasted, in a moment, the fairest prospect of improvement, and calls me, raw and unfit as I am, to enter upon the ministry of reconciliation! Inscrutable, severe visitation! I desire humbly to submit, and to adore him that its severity is tempered with mercy. I desire to feel the correction which deprives me of a blessing I too little improved! I desire to hear the reproof for my ingratitude and my sin, and that the fruit of this affliction may be to take away sin. Too little have I attended to the former strokes of his rod. Too prone was I, when he smote me, to go on frowardly in the way of my heart. Lord, sanctify thy rod!

"I bless his name, however, that he continued my father so long with me; and that he put it into his heart to leave me a number of excellent written advices to guide my conduct in future life. May he bless them for their desired end!

"And since he has seen fit to remove him from a world of sin and sorrow, and to translate him to glory, I would bless him for that also. The Lord, I see, will make me serve him in his own way. By ruining my favourite schemes, he has punished me for making an idol of human preparation. By taking away my father, he has punished me for leaning too much upon a created comfort. And now I am fatherless; I have none to trust in but himself. I will therefore, from this time, cry unto him, 'Thou art my father, and the guide of my youth.' If I know myself, the motives on which I began to study for the ministry were pure. And, as I am sure that I do not now thrust myself into it, I will put my confidence in Jehovah. Here, then, poor and unfit, and weak as I am, I devote myself, my time, my talents, my all, to the service of God in the ministry of his Son. I dare not, I will not undertake it, in my own strength; but surely the grace of Christ is sufficient for me—his strength can be made perfect in my weakness.

"I wish not to be distracted with a sinful anxiety about future progress, in things temporal or spiritual. I wish to cast upon the Redeemer, as the husband of the widow, the care of my affectionate step-mother; as the father of the fatherless, the care of my orphan sisters; as the great Shepherd of the sheep, the care of the congregation who have lost their pastor (O, that the affliction may be sanctified to them!); and as he that buildeth up Jerusalem, the care of Zion. Adored be his name! his ability and his mercy extend to them all.

"May he make my own soul to know the richness of that love, and that inexhaustible fullness which I am to recommend to others!—and then to preach Christ, will be both profitable and pleasant!"

The death of his father thus abridged the period of his study in Scotland, and altogether prevented his sojourn on the Continent.

The reputation which he had gained among his teachers and associates at Edinburgh is variously attested.

The following communication was addressed to the Rev. Joseph McElroy, of New York, by the late Dr. David Hosack:

"Feeling, as I do, a deep interest in the memory of my fellow-student, the late Dr. Mason, who has distinguished himself by his eminent talents and usefulness in his profession, and has contributed to elevate the literary character of our country; it affords me great pleasure to be able to state the high estimation in which he was held, when prosecuting his theological studies at the University of Edinburgh. Upon my arrival at Liverpool, in September, 1792, immediately after Mr. Mason had returned to New York, who, in consequence of his father's death, had been requested to take charge of the congregation then vacant, I accidentally became acquainted with the late Doctor Hunter, the Professor of Divinity of the University of Edinburgh. That gentleman, finding that I had been intimately acquainted with Mr. Mason, and had been his fellow-student at Columbia College, the strong attachment he felt for his pupil immediately led to much conversation, which resulted in an invitation to take a seat with him in his post-chaise upon his return to Edinburgh, which I accepted.

"This gratifying occurrence gave me an opportunity of acquiring much information relative to the University, and particularly of the Divinity class. Dr. Hunter, upon that occasion, observed to me that his pupil, Mr. Mason, had evinced talents of the first order, and had distinguished himself as one of the most prominent members of his class, at that time consisting of about sixty in number. He further added, that it was the custom to exercise the class in composition, upon themes previously given out by the Professor, and that on the the Saturday of each week the theses so prepared were read, and became the subjects of public discussion. In these exercises, Dr. Hunter remarked, that few wrote with the facility, originality, and force, that always marked the compositions presented by Mr. Mason; but that, in the extemporaneous debate that ensued, he held decidedly the first rank, ever exhibiting great powers of analysis, extensive research, much acuteness of remark, and these enforced by an eloquence that uniformly commanded the respect, not only of his instructor, but of every member of his class.

"I may add, that the Rev. and learned Dr. Erskine was a no less ardent admirer of the talents and promise of Mr. Mason, at the same time that he frequently spoke of him with feelings of the warmest attachment—nor can I ever forget the kind and hospitable reception which my intimacy with Mr. Mason secured to me in the families he had frequented."*

---

* Dr. McElroy's Sermon, pp. 22, 23.

CHAPTER V.

1792—1801.

SETTLEMENT AND EARLY MINISTRY.

Returns from Scotland—Is licensed—Supplies his Father's church—Is ordained—Mrs. Mason—Character of his labours—Mrs. Graham's Estimation—Fast-day Sermon—Missionary Sermon—Mr. Haldane—Missionary Correspondence.

MR. MASON embarked at Greenock, early in August, 1792, and reached New York in September. The attention of his father's church had already been directed to him for the vacant charge. At their instance, a few days after his arrival home, a special meeting of the Associate Reformed Presbytery of Pennsylvania was held, at which the early missionary associate of his father, the Rev. Robert Annan, with the Rev. John Smith, and the Ruling Elder, John Ellis, were present, when he was examined and duly licensed to preach. The instrument attesting these transactions is dated New York, Oct. 18, 1792.

Three days after, he thus records the thoughts and feelings which occupied his mind:

"NEW YORK, Oct. 21st, 1792. Verily I have been a child of Providence. Goodness, undeserved goodness and mercy, have followed me all the days of my life. I desire to reckon among the loving kindnesses of the Lord, his tender care of me during my absence from home; his preserving me from the dangers of the ocean; and restoring me, in more peace and comfort than I could expect, to my family, my friends, my country.

"I bless his sovereignty for choosing me at so early a period of my life to preach the gospel of peace; for enabling me to go through preparatory trials with comfort and credit; for not confounding me in his presence in my first attempt to speak in his name, (Saturday, Oct. 20); for giving me an opportunity of celebrating redeeming love in the ordinance of the Supper, this day observed; and for inclining my heart to roll myself, with all my guilt and vileness, upon his rich mercy.

"I am all feebleness; I am a very child; utterly unqualified for going out and in before the people of God. But my Redeemer is all sufficient; and in his all-sufficiency I trust.

"Sensible of the great guilt of those who preach to others a Saviour in whom they never believed, and who venture upon ministerial work in their own strength, I wish to go out of myself into Christ, to flee from my sins, my pollution, my duties, my attainments, into his covenant righteousness. Jehovah knows that the supreme desire of my soul is to be found in the Lord Jesus, not having my own righteousness. Here, then, as in the sight of the Lord God omniscient, I avouch him to be my God, my father, my friend, my support, in the Son of his love. I avouch the blessed Jesus to be my Redeemer, my righteousness, my strength. I wish to live on him and for him; on the fulness of his covenant, and to his glory. I avouch the Holy Spirit to be my comforter and guide. I wish to read and pray, and sing, and study my Bible, and perform every duty of the Christian and ministerial calling, under an unction from the Holy One. I devote myself to Jehovah, the Triune God, in the ministry of the gospel of peace.

"And now I am no more mine own, but thine, O God of my righteousness! I beseech thee, leave me not, neither forsake me; but make me a polished shaft in thine hand, and daily supply me with all the gifts and graces requisite to my important station. Help me to feel the power of thy truth upon my own heart; and as I have believed, so may I speak, for the sake of the Lord Jesus. Amen!"

From the time of his licensure he supplied the pulpit till the following March, when the church and congregration, being fully satisfied with his qualifications for the charge, presented him a unanimous call to become their pastor. The moderator of the meeting at which the vote was formally taken, was the

Rev. Thomas G. Smith, (who aftewards became connected with the Reformed Dutch Church); and the call was signed by names which still retain and diffuse a sweet fragrance in the city of New York. Among them we find Alexander Robertson, Samuel Loudon, George Lindsay, William Wilson, James R. Smith, Robert Gosman, John Young, Samuel Milligan, James Ronalds, James Tillary, Andrew Otterson, John Currie, Thomas Rich, Robert Blake, John Taylor, John Forsyth, Archibald M'Intire, James Walker, Walter Heyer.

Soon after these preliminaries he was ordained, and in due form took charge of the church as their pastor.

On the 13th of May, in the same year, he was married to Miss Ann Lefferts, a pious young lady of a Dutch family in New York, with whom he had become acquainted before he left home for Scotland, and for whom he seems to have cherished a special regard during his absence. This proved in all respects an eminently happy union for both parties, and continued such with uninterrupted mutual confidence and affection till they were separated by death. It is due to the memory of Mrs. Mason to say, that to her good sense and unaffected piety, she added the accomplishments of a cultivated mind and a warm heart. Her judgment was sound, her disposition cheerful, her taste discriminating, her manners both dignified and pleasing. At the same time she was ever ready with alacrity to apply herself to the practical duties of her station—relieving her husband of many cares, and thus enabling him to devote himself more entirely to his appropriate labours. She was universally respected by those within the sphere of her various social relations. In her domestic circle especially, was she ever felt to be all that a good wife and a good mother ought to be; and the best model for those coming after her. Her resolution and firmness, united with uniform prudence and kindness, gave her a silent but complete control over her household, and secured among them an order and harmony which are seldom equalled. Often has Dr. Mason been heard to bestow the most unqualified commendation upon the wisdom of her counsels and the efficiency of her coöperation. In one of his later letters to a friend in Britain, he says: "Among earthly things, she is the most precious treasure which my great Benefactor has granted me."

Feeling both the tenderness and the sacredness of the ties created by his ordination, Mr. Mason entered upon his pastoral duties with the greatest assiduity and zeal. Most earnestly did he devote himself to the best interests of his people. Viewing these interests in the light of that volume which exhibits their relation to the Supreme Being, and to an unending destiny, his labours partook eminently of a spiritual character. The thought of a large and flourishing society in the midst of a splendid metropolis, was very secondary and subordinate to that of a church adorned with the intelligence and the virtues of evangelical christianity. Such views gave a direction to all his ministrations, and found their way to the hearts of those whom he served. Seldom has a minister succeeded better in securing the affections and confidence of his flock. He not only satisfied his hearers, but filled them with admiration. From the commencement of his labours, they assigned him to the first place among the eminent divines with whom he was surrounded. His urbanity of manners, his cordiality of disposition, his undisguised frankness and sincerity, his self-consecration to the high ends of his calling, and his transcendent ability in the pulpit, gave him such a place in their regard as few have ever attained. His first communion season made such an impression upon his people as was never lost. The late James Walker, of Schenectady, then lately arrived from Scotland, happened to be present at the preparatory sermon. More than fifty years afterwards, he repeated to the writer some of the words which were uttered on the occasion, and said that he still retained a vivid recollection of the very tones of voice with which they were uttered, as well as of the whole appearance of the young preacher.

The estimation in which he was held, is sufficiently indicated by the following extract of a letter of Mrs. Graham, dated 1793: "Our young Timothy, J. M., is a perfect champion for the Gospel of Jesus. The Lord has well girded him and largely endowed him. He walks closely with God, and speaks and preaches like a Christian of long experience. He was ordained about two months ago in his father's church, and a few weeks after married a lady of eminent piety, and preached all day, both the Sabbath before and after. There is probably no church in New York whose discipline is as strict, nor one which has so many communicants. He is reckoned a lad of great talents and an orator; and many of even the idle and careless go to hear him. . . . . Oh, for a thankful heart! The Lord has done wonders for me and mine; and blessed be his name for this mercy also, that in a remarkable manner, by a strange concurrence of circumstances, he hedged me in to become a member of this congregation, where I am led and fed with the same truths which nourished my soul in Zion's gates at Edinburgh; and I am helped to sing the Lord's song in a foreign land." (*Memoirs*, ch. 4.)

Nor was his reputation limited to the circle of his own people, or his own denomination. Very soon the community at large assigned him a conspicuous place in that galaxy of evangelical talent with which their city was adorned. In the course of the very first year of his settlement a sermon preached on a fast day was required for the press. It may be seen in the first volume of his published works. It is written with vigour, and exhibits very definitely the author's views respecting the nature and prevalence of public sins, their relation to the dealings of a righteous moral Governor, and the obligations of a people to recognize the administration of that moral Governor and to humble themselves before him.

About eighteen months later he was prevailed upon to publish a sermon of thanksgiving for the blessings received from that same Supreme Ruler, in which he exhibits the beneficent aspect of his kind providence, and the duty of all men to praise him. This is also found in his works.

His next printed discourse is entitled 'Hope for the Heathen,' and was preached, soon after its organization, before the New York Missionary Society, November 7, 1797. It depicts with great force the deplorable condition of the Pagan world, demonstrates with clearness and power the insufficiency of all human devices for improving it, and then exhibits the nature and tendency of those divinely appointed means which the risen and triumphant Saviour has taught his disciples to employ for securing that joyful consummation. As he proceeds in his application of the subject, he rises in his strength, and kindles into fervour. Objections are disposed of, obligations urged, and motives presented in a style of nervous eloquence, which, accompanied as it was by his unrivalled elocution, must have contributed not a little to that strong impulse in behalf of missions which New York Christians so early received. The discourse deserves a place among the performances of his maturer days. We give a very brief extract:—

"Unbelief looks at opposition and faints. Faith looks to the promise of God and conquers. In the strength of the promise, worm Jacob threshes the mountains, and beats them small. It is the way of the Holy One of Israel to order his servants upon difficult duty, without showing them immediately how they are to succeed. Reserving to himself the manner and the praise of their victory, he lays upon them a necessity of trusting his faithfulness; and they never did, and they never shall, trust him in vain."

The subject of missions was, at that time, comparatively new in the American churches, but the intelligent reader cannot fail of perceiving how fully it was comprehended by the preacher, and how distinctly the obligations which it imposes pressed upon his mind. The views which he then entertained he never altered, though at a later period of his life he was more particularly and anxiously intent upon another great object. He was one of the founders of the society which he addressed, and he was its first secretary. Its annual reports, and its correspondence, (published in part in a Missionary Magazine of that day), present in greater detail the interest which he felt in the cause, and the ardour with which he was disposed to pursue it. He was also the author of an address to the Christians of the United States, issued on the formation of this society, 1796. It was re-published in Scotland, and raised his reputation there.

His mind may have been greatly influenced on this subject by a communication received through his uncle, who says of the writer, that he "is a growing minister, and an advanced Christian. I know not his equal among the young ministers of that connexion." As this communication relates a few interesting facts illustrating the character and career of another individual whom the Christian public can never cease to admire, we need make no apology for giving a good part of it:—

STIRLING, NOV. 28, 1796.

* * * * * * *

"Mr. Haldane, for some time past, hath felt deeply the force of truth. He longed for an opportunity to diffuse, for the benefit of others, that word of life which he felt so pleasant and delightful to himself. The life of a country gentleman he found the most silly and insignificant; visiting, and receiving visits, and unprofitable trifling, filled up the time; and amusements, in which there was nothing rational, returned in one dull routine. He reflected long how he should be useful to the world. Upon examination, he found that property was a talent he possessed, and finding himself in the Scriptures denominated a steward, he concluded that he was called to use this talent for the spread of religious knowledge, and himself to take a share in the toil. Mrs. Haldane, with equal dignity of mind, agreed that the life of a country gentleman was silly and trifling; that he could not dispose of his property better, and that she was perfectly willing to second his attempts. If he should commence teacher of religion, she would cheerfully go with him to dwell in a *manse.* Having fixed the plan in his own mind, he communicated it to my friend Mr. Innes. With Mr. Haldane, his consent to accompany him was a first principle. As it was wholly a confidential business, he affirmed he knew of no other in whom he could fully confide but himself. If he refused, the plan would be given up, and another devised. If he consented, it would be carried on. His intimacy for two years, and principally his instrumentality in bringing him to adopt his present principles, and views of religion, laid a foundation for unlimited confidence. This representation of the matter placed my friend in a very trying situation. He found difficulties from his relation to his people, from his probable success in this place, from his friends, and from his own weakly constitution. But he saw a grand object before him, a large field of usefulness opened, an illustrious plan proposed, which his refusal would frustrate forever. After weighing everything attentively, he found that he could. not say, I will not second your views. Upon his consent, Messrs. Bogue, of Gosport, and Ewing, of Edinburgh, were asked. Their consent was cheerfully given. In consequence of this, Mr. Haldane hath bestowed twenty-four thousand pounds upon a mission to Hindostan. Ten thousand is allotted for the support of Messrs. Haldane, Bogue, Ewing and Innes. They have already procured the consent of Mr. Dodds, a surgeon, with a fortune of a thousand pounds, and of a religious character, to accompy them; and another gentleman in Mr. Bogue's congregation, with a fortune of five thousand pounds, and a concern in trade worth three hundred pounds per annum. But the consent of the Board of Control must be obtained before they can go out. The last letters I had from London, (about ten days ago), state that there were hopes of their succeeding with Mr. Dundas. But nothing positive hath yet arrived. There are fears that the whole may be frustrated. Mr. Grant, in the direction of the East India Company, had made proposals some time ago to Mr. Dundas to divide Hindostan into parishes, and to episcopize the natives. Mr. Dundas wished him to defer his plan till the conclusion of the war. A similar fate may await the present application. If they should succeed, Mr. Haldane, as he finds other prospects of usefulness opening, has resolved to set his whole fortune afloat in the spread of religious knowledge. This is a noble triumph of religious principle over selfishness—a man not only devoting his fortune, but hazarding his life, for the sake of Jesus, and the happiness of his fellow-men. They intend to settle at Benaris, north of Calcutta, the very seat of Braminical knowledge, from which central point they propose to diffuse the light of revelation all over Hindostan. They will constitute themselves into one compact society, and their first object is the translation of the Bible into the language of the natives. They will exist as a seminary of learning, and act upon principles purely apostolical. From this select society missionary instructions will be issued, and a correspondence kept up with all the missionary societies in Europe. The God of heaven bless the undertaking! Do you ask my sentiments of the mission? Here I shall be at a loss for words to express either my feelings or my opinions. I felt as if thunderstruck when I first heard the plan disclosed. It hath often occupied my thoughts since. I feel as if carried back to apostolical times, and behold with rapture ancient love and zeal kindled anew. Instead of beholding only a Barnabas selling his estate in the isle of Cyprus and laying the money down at the Apostles' feet, I see with new emotions a Haldane, with the same noble spirit, devoting his fortune and hazarding his life, with his worthy colleagues, for the sake of our common Lord, and the spread of his glorious gospel. It is an object quite new in the Christian world. The profane will scoff and pronounce them mad enthusiasts; but the hardy veterans are prepared to meet the storm and pity the ignorance of the multitude. The religious world, however, will stand rapt in the astonishment of joy, admire the wonders of grace, and pray for success to the noble undertaking. It hath my hearty approbation. The plan is rational; wisdom shines in its arrangements; and the purest principles gave it birth. I wish many may be seized with the same holy ardour, and bring us fast back to apostolic times. Methinks I hear from the centre of Hindostan a voice proclaiming so loud as to be heard through the whole of Europe —"Brethren lay aside your narrow views, your party spirit, your little animosities, which have long stopped the circulation of brotherly love. Break down those thorny hedges which have too long separated brethren from one another, and unite in the spirit of the gospel and the bonds of Christian fellowship. Let the absurd plan of uniformity be dropped, and learn the liberal doctrine of Christian forbearance. Let not little circumstantials make you knit your brows, and lead you to anathematise one another. Live as brethren of the same family, and breathe universal benevolence to all mankind. Look at us, and see that apostolic unity is possible if the spirit of forbearance is practiced."

Yours, with much affection,

JOHN SMART.

For some time after this, Mr. Mason's correspondence was a good deal interspersed with the subject of missions. Our plan does not admit of inserting more than a few extracts. The first is from a letter of the Rev. Walter Buchanan, of Canongate, Edinburgh, dated February 23rd, 1797. "I am happy to learn that the missionary spirit has reached America, and it was with heartfelt satisfaction that I read this evening an excellent address from a society at New-York signed by you as their Secretary. May many such societies be formed on your side of the Atlantic, and the blessing of heaven attend your endeavours!

"The accounts of what has been doing in Britain, with a view to send the Gospel to the heathen, must have afforded you much satisfaction. But nothing perhaps would fill you with more surprise than the design of your friend, Mr. Ewing, and his associates, to go to the East Indies. He and his friends have applied to the Directors of the East India Company for permission to go, and have been refused! What an awful thing this is!—To forbid the Gospel to be preached to the heathen! Nay, to prevent men from preaching to *their fellow-subjects*, who are without the means of salvation! May the Father of Mercies pardon their guilt, and open their eyes!"

Another is from a letter of the Rev. Archibald Bonar, Edinburgh, dated the next year: "I long to hear more particulars about your Missionary Society. The animating and conformable information concerning it, in your letter to Mr. Ewing and myself, proved most seasonable and refreshing to us both, and to many others." Again: "Accept my best thanks for your sermons. I have read them all with much pleasure—your missionary sermon in particular. I trust the spirit there manifested will spread widely and rapidly on both sides of the Atlantic. The very commencements of such a spirit are delightful, as they give prospects of future splendour when the predictions of Messiah's reign are to be accomplished. One thing I am sure of, that the very exertions now making for diffusing the Gospel among the heathen, have been attended with much utility at home. They have given an energy, activity, and a spirit of union to Christians, that were not formerly experienced. It forms an agreeable relief to the thinking mind to observe the serenity of the church of Christ amidst the convulsions of the world. Plans are everywhere forming for the spread of the Gospel, in spite of the wars and rumours of war that so widely prevail; and from these plans we may hope some good will arise to conterbalance the many afflicting circumstances of the present time."

In the same year Mr. Mason received a letter from an esteemed correspondent in London, which can hardly fail to be refreshing to the heart of every Christian reader, as it shows the reflections and feelings which prevailed in that early day of the missionary enterprise, and especially as it is a most delightful indication of those incidental benefits which Christians themselves derive from their efforts in this cause:—

TO THE REV. J. M. MASON.

No. 2 Salisbury Place, St. Mary-le-bone,
London, January 6th, 1798.

Rev. and Dear Brother: In answer to your obliging letter by our pious friend Capt. Foster, I wrote on his return in February last. My letter, as you may have heard, shared in the fate of the ship's capture by the enemy. I would not regret this accident, but as it prevented me at that time from gratifying my own heart by expressing the high sense I have of your friendship, and my earnest desire of your correspondence. United closely as we are in the bonds of ministerial fellowship, the cord I feel to be drawn still closer by the discovery you make, of the liberality of your mind, and your zeal for spreading abroad the fame of our blessed Master among the heathen. To the same elevated point of esteem and love in the minds of the Directors of the Missionary Society, have the exertions of your fathers and brethren in your native land for compassing this most valuable object, raised their characters. It is by the order of my loved and honoured associates, that I now write to you and request of your brethren to accept of our affectionate congratulations on the forming of your society, and of our strong desire to walk with you in habits of intimate friendship and coöperation. That you may know our affairs and how we do, they request your acceptance of the publications which accompany this letter. In addition to the information contained in them, I feel my mind happy in being able to tell you, that in consequence of the desire of some pious and compassionate planters and others in Jamaica, the Directors have resolved to send out, as soon as possible, four missionaries to labour among the poor untutored Africans in that island. A mission is also undertaken to India; and we hope that in the course of the ensuing spring the brethren destined for that part of the vineyard will leave Europe. The desolate estate of the British provinces in your extensive continent, hath also drawn the compassionate notice of the Society, and nothing but the want of fit persons to be sent has retarded the execution of their designs. We are confident, however, that He who hath so liberally provided the pecuniary means, and whose Spirit can as fully replenish the unfurnished mind with zeal, piety and love, will not withhold from us and from the heritage of his Son the well qualified and willing labourer. It is not unlikely that some of ourselves, or of our brethren in the ministry, in different parts of the kingdom, may be prevailed upon to embark in this good cause. In truth we have reason to blush on account of our backwardness and cowardice in this warfare.

You will see in the publications which accompany this, how cordially our brethren in Scotland coöperate with us, both by communication of their designs to us, and by associating their missionaries with ours to Sierra Leone. As the concern which hath stirred the minds of God's people in both quarters of the Christian world, has for its object the illumination in general of them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, it is a desirable thing that a good understanding should subsist among the missionary societies, and a ready and timeous communication be made to each other of their respective views, plans and designs, that there may be no interference in our exertions,—nothing like strife or emulation among us, as we are brethren. The field is extensive, and the Canaanite is still in the land. It will be very obliging therefore on your part, and highly gratifying to us, if you will communicate the views of your society as to the place and plan of their operations; and all other intelligence which may be of use to us, and to the cause of man's salvation.

Your most affectionate brother and servant,

ALEX. WAUGH.

CHAPTER VI.

1793—1801.

SUCCESS IN HIS LABOURS.

Increase of his Church—Katie Ferguson—Second House of Worship—Letters on Frequent Communion—Doctrine of Faith and Justification—Spiritual conflicts—Londonderry Presbytery—Negotiation with Dutch and Presbyterian Churches—Plan for a religious book-store and weekly paper—An active Trustee of Columbia College—Election of Mr. Jefferson.

For the first eight or ten years of his ministry, Mr. Mason's labours were as successful as they were popular. In that time he gathered about 600 new members into his church from the world, besides accessions by certificate from other churches; and this number could have been greatly exceeded if he had been more lax in his notions respecting the qualifications of membership. He was more anxious about the quality than the quantity of his increase. In a letter to his fellow-student, the Rev. William Stoddart, of Amsterdam, he says:—

"My gracious Lord has not disowned my feeble labours. This man, and that, have been born in our Zion. The congregation was comparatively small when it came into my hands, containing not quite 200 persons who had been admitted to sacramental privileges. During my ministry about 600 have been added; and the increase, I trust, owes nothing to soothing doctrines or to remissness of discipline. Had we chosen to throw open the door to the merely civil and moral, our number would have been much greater. But I wish to see Christians in the churches. The world and the church can never unite. If we make the foolish attempt, there will be a conflict; and either the one or the other will be prostrated. This city has always been distinguished by an evangelical ministry. It contains, at this moment, thirteen or fourteen men who preach purely and decidedly Jesus Christ, and him crucified; besides several others who appear to hold the head, although their doctrines be not in all things so correct as we could wish. Happy for us! *O, fortunatus nimium!* if scriptural *discipline* were equally extensive."

Though thus intent upon maintaining a high standard of practical piety in his church, by strict discipline, as well as faithful preaching, he was always ready to meet the humblest inquirer, and to strengthen the weakest germ of genuine religion. A pleasing example we have in a coloured woman, long known in New York as a consistent, estimable, and useful Christian, Katie Ferguson. She must have been received into the fellowship of the church about 1797. Her religious experience, as learned from her own lips, was, soon after her death, detailed by a friend in one of the public journals, July 20, 1854: "At fourteen years of age, she was converted to God. When under convictions of sin, she determined to go and see the Rev. J. M. Mason, whose church she then attended. She was afraid to go, and tremblingly apprehensive that she might not receive the attention which she needed." But how groundless her fears! "The good man," she said, "did not speak harshly to her or repulse her." He showed "kind and tender feelings." Without waiting for the "trembling coloured girl to say anything, he introduced the subject, and opened to her the Scriptures as she disclosed to him the secrets of her heart."

Other instances of his care for friendless and obscure individuals, and of his painstaking exertions for their benefit, may be found in some later pages.

In a few years the number of his hearers became too great for accommodation in their house of worship. This led to the erection of another; and soon after, to the organization of a second church. In his speech before the Presbytery, on the resignation of his charge in 1810, he says: "Four years after my settlement it became necessary to swarm. A new edifice, rather larger than the first, was built in Magazine street. A considerable section of the worshippers in this house removed to that. In less than two years they were replaced, and the new house was also filled."

Both societies continued for several years under the same pastor. In this state of things no particular inconvenience was experienced for a while, except an increase of pastoral labour and care. At length, however, a separation of the two churches became necessary, and with it a transfer of members. Mr. M. was not the man to suffer his own interests or attachments to interfere with a more general good. As the new enterprise presented a call for efficient helpers, especially in official stations, he did not hesitate, though at the expense of no little feeling, to persuade some to go, who, without such persuasion, would have preferred to remain. His object was to impart strength where it was needed. In due time, both the wisdom and the disinterestedness of the measure was acknowledged by all.

About this period, Mr. M. undertook a more difficult task for the benefit of his denomination at large. The churches of Scotland, in their honest zeal, had encumbered the observance of the Lord's Supper with certain fasts, and other appendages, which were as onerous to the disciples as they were unauthorized by the Master. The consequence was, that the ordinance was administered but once or twice a year. The custom, however, had the sanction of age and of great names; it was particularly venerated by the seceding bodies; and, in coming to this side of the Atlantic, had lost none of the prejudice by which it was fortified. Of course, no change could be effected in the matter without encountering the most formidable obstacles. Though still a young man, he felt constrained to make an effort for removing the evil, which, in 1798, resulted in the publication of his "Letters on Frequent Communion." This work was executed with as much ability as it had been undertaken with courage. It made a great sensation among Scottish people everywhere. Many were convinced, and without much difficulty came into these new views. Others naturally experienced a severe struggle in disengaging themselves from customs which had always been regarded by them as "the good old way."

In remote districts a lasting wound was made which for many years, on every new occasion, betrayed fresh symptoms of irritation. On the whole, however, good was done. If a complete revolution was not at once achieved everywhere, a new direction was given to thought on the subject, and a yoke of bondage was gradually removed from a very large portion of the societies in his ecclesiastical connexion.

During the same year (1798),—to use a phraseology somewhat peculiar,—" An Act concerning Faith and Justification was emitted by the Associate Reformed Church in North America." This paper was drawn up by Mr. Mason at the instance of the Synod. It was intended as a testimony and guard against certain spreading errors; and, though of such a nature as to require the most careful consideration of mature age and experience, it is understood to have given entire satisfaction to the whole denomination from that day till the present.

In this period of his life, he was also subjected to such spiritual conflicts as have already been noticed. In coming out of one of these, or rather a series of them, he records his feelings in language like the following:

" MARCH 23d, 1796. A long period of darkness and deadness hath at length been succeeded by an hour of light and life. This morning I was engaged in reading a part of Dr. Wynpersse's excellent defence of the true and eternal Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ; I lighted on a pleasing solution of the objections raised by adversaries against this glorious fundamental doctrine of the gospel from John xvii. 3. On turning up my interleaved Bible to mark the place, my eye caught that sweet passage in chapter xvi. 22. '*And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.*' It was, indeed, a word of power—of power divine. I *felt* it spoken to *me*, even to *me*. It pierced, it melted my very soul. Coldness, hardness, dulness, fled away. It is the voice of my beloved—behold he cometh! Never did this passage appear so sweet, so rich, so full of grace and glory. Vastly, inexpressibly, yea, infinitely superior to the most eloquent human commendation, is the testimony of the Holy Ghost to Jesus Christ. When he takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto us, how lovely, how desirable, how supremely excellent does he appear! My beloved is white and ruddy; the chief among ten thousand; yea, he [illegible] *altogether* lovely. Precious, thrice precious Jesus, exalted t give a Prince, and a Saviour, my soul adores thee! Thou [illegible]ess to

Lord, and my God! Jesus! how fragrant is his name! Jesus, how divine his glory! I *know* he is divine: he hath spoken life and peace to my soul. He hath done what no creature can do, he has brought me out of a fearful pit, and out of the miry clay; and hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise to our God. Worship him, all ye gods! Jesus, how tender his compassions! How boundless his mercies! 'I will see you again.' Lord, how is it that thou dost manifest thyself to me, and not unto the world? May I ever be confounded for my unrighteousness! *Thou* art my worth: my righteousness: my life: my soul desires none else. And 'your heart shall rejoice!" It *does* rejoice, blessed Jesus. It rejoices in *thee.* I will greatly rejoice in the Lord. My soul shall be joyful in *my* God; for he hath clothed me with the robe of righteousness: he hath covered me with the garments of salvation! and, all thanks be to thee, no man can take this joy from me. O, feast of fat things! O, moment never to be forgotten! This repays a thousand-fold all that I have been called to do and to bear for his name's sake. One such moment wipes away all the reproach of the cross. He is as good as his word, that he will give to them that love him an hundred-fold, even in this present life. Pleasant is the path of obedience, easy is duty, light is the cross, smiling is death, beautiful the grave, welcome is eternity, when Jesus lifts upon us the light of his countenance! In this faith and this experience may I live! In this die! Yea, though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for THOU art with me. I roll myself, my family, my flock, my all, upon thee, O, thou mighty to save! May I never, as a Christian, or a minister, know anything but Jesus Christ and him crucified. In this may I gladly spend and be spent! I commit now the keeping of my soul, and my soul's frame, unto thee. Keep me from falling. Keep me from pride; keep me from security; keep me from earthly-mindedness. To the praise of the glory of grace, I am what I am. I know in whom I have believed. I will sing of the mercies of the Lord t[illegible]ver."

rev[illegible]considerable number of Scottish settlers in New-Hampshire was gi[illegible] other parts of New-England formed themselves into called the Londonderry Presbytery, and by a natural affinity became connected with the Associate Reformed Synod. After a few years and under the peculiarity of their circumstances, they thought themselves justified in departing from some of the established usages of their denomination—such as singing Watts' Psalms and Hymns, and permitting non-professors to vote in certain external church matters. For this the Synod rebuked them. They remonstrated. In 1796, Mr. Mason and another minister were appointed a committee to visit, and, if possible, reclaim them. This committee were providentially prevented from going, but wrote an earnest letter expostulating with the Presbytery on their irregularities, and sustaining the ground taken by the Synod. In behalf of the Presbytery, one of its members, the Rev. William Morison, in a communication dated Londonderry, August 26, 1796, replied among other things, as follows: "The distance of place, with other circumstances relative to me and my brethren in New-England, render personal interviews with our southern brethren very inconvenient. Our Presbytery have increased from the small number of three or four, to ten settled ministers, viz.: Messrs. Moor, Ewers, Annan, Taggart, Oliver, Dana, Tomb, Brower, Pidgin, with myself. This Presbytery consider themselves (with Divine aid) competent to all the purposes of judicial authority in the churches or societies under their care; are best acquainted with their customs, temper, and manners; and their situation with respect to other denominations. They have considered the act of the Synod respecting Psalmody as injurious to the cause of Presbytery in New-England; and have voted to reply accordingly to the letter of the Synod on the subject. Should the committee yet come, and warmly insist upon the observance of the late Synodical acts respecting Psalmody and terms of communion, I will not say they may not gratify a few; but they will, I think, give a mortal wound to the influence of the Synod in this part of the continent. Common observation and experience concur with revelation in teaching us the necessity of governing people in a manner best adapted to their circumstances for their good and for the honour of religion. For my own part, I cannot say but a coalescence between the Synod and the General Assembly, in a rational manner, would give me pleasure. It would open a wide door of usefulness to many ministers; and might lay the foundation of a more uniform and general reformation in America. Of all countries, she requires the most generous and benevolent system of religion, as well as of civil administration."

It was thus found that there was no withstanding the current of events. The Presbytery could not be controlled by the Synod. Their attendance at its meetings fell off, till it finally ceased altogether. Many of the congregations became absorbed by the prevailing organization. The Presbytery itself, greatly reduced, at length joined the General Assembly, in which connexion it still remains. Since 1801 the Associate Reformed Synod "have not considered it as in their connexion." [Minutes of Synod.]

It is interesting to remember that, under the force of circumstances, the Synod themselves, some years after that time, greatly modified their opinions and policy on the above subjects. There is evidently in all our churches a strong tendency towards certain American characteristics. In externals there is in all, a necessity for putting on something of an American dress; and in the same proportion to divest ourselves of foreign peculiarities. Of this Mr. M. became afterwards most fully convinced.

At the meeting of the General Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church, held in the City of New York, June, 1798, it was resolved "that the most speedy and effectual measures ought to be pursued to revive that friendly correspondence which subsisted for several years between the Reformed Dutch, the Presbyterian, and the Associate Reformed Churches, and to make provision for its improvement and permanency."

For accomplishing this purpose, a committee was appointed, to meet like committees from the other bodies, to devise and mature a plan to be submitted to their respective judicatories. A joint meeting of these several committees was accordingly held in the Consistory Chamber of the Dutch Church, New York, June 19th and 20th, 1798, at which the Rev. Dr. John Rogers presided, and the Rev. J. M. Mason acted as clerk.

A plan was agreed upon, subject to the ratification of the several bodies. It contemplated more definite and intimate relations than had ever before existed. It was adopted by a unanimous vote in the General Assembly, May 17th, 1799. It was not, however, attended with the same success in the Synods of the other two denominations. Christians seem as yet to have been too much afraid of each other to admit of their coming nearer together. The General Synod of the Dutch Church, at their next triennial meeting at Albany, June, 1800, declined to ratify the plan. [See minutes of that year.] The measure had a similar result in the Associate Reformed Synod.

Among Dr. Mason's papers of this period is found a matured plan for a religious book-store and newspaper. Though it was not put into operation, it shows that he both discerned and felt what the times demanded. Religious publications of every kind were scarce. Even the clergy, at least the younger portion of them, who could not have brought with them a supply from the old countries, found it almost impossible to procure requisite helps in either theology or sound literature. Nor were there any means for the speedy diffusion of religious intelligence through a sparse population. But the time for Bible and Tract depositories, and for religious weeklies, now so common, had then not yet come. The project was abandoned.

In further evidence of the interest which he ever felt in the cause of solid education, and of his disposition to labour for its advancement, we find him at an early day taking an active part in the Board of Trustees of Columbia College. A communication was addressed to the presiding officer of that institution for accurate information respecting various points by a committee of which he was chairman. This was the initiative of a series of measures for improving their system.

Believing that the choice of Christian rulers was not inconsistent with religious liberty—believing even that the prevalence of Christianity was essential to the stability of our republican institutions, Mr. Mason felt great alarm at the prospect of having a President who openly rejected the truths of revelation. He was accordingly induced to write a strong pamphlet against the election of Mr. Jefferson. Whatever may be thought of the expediency of such a step, it was at the time approved by many, if not most of his clerical brethren. In proof of this, we have the written testimony of one who was extensively known, and generally regarded as very prudent.

The Rev. A. Proudfit, of Salem, N. Y., under date of Nov. 10th, 1800, writes: "Accept of my cordial thanks for the pamphlet containing your noble, I will add patriotic testimony in opposition to an avowed enemy of *our Redeemer*, as the chief magistrate of our country. My dear friend, what shall we say of our political delusions? Sometimes I reflect on it with grief; sometimes with astonishment; sometimes with indignation. It is a fact equally alarming and humiliating, that our most morally and religiously disposed people are, in many instances, the most politically infatuated. May a gracious God discover to us the cause of his controversy, and enable us to repent and return before it be too late!"

Chas. H. Me

CHAPTER VII.

1801.

CALL FOR MINISTERS.

Destitution—Measures for a supply—Resolutions of the Associate Reformed Synod—Mr. M. chosen to visit Scotland—Letter from Mr. Bethune—Prominent Preachers in Scotland—Tabernacle Party—Ministers for America.

THE want of an adequate supply of religious teachers for this country, has nowhere been more deeply felt than in our Scotch settlements. The people of those settlements had brought with them from their native shores the sentiments and habits which had so long happily prevailed there, and their adherence to them was unusually strong. The seceding portion of them, especially, were deeply imbued with the evangelical spirit, and earnestly desired to strengthen and perpetuate it. Their first pastors had come from Scotland; and to the same quarter their eyes were naturally turned for such as they still needed. This resulted, in part, no doubt, from those feelings of nationality for which the Scotch have always been distinguished, and in part from their zeal for what were known among them as the "Marrow Doctrines;" *i. e.* a system taught by a little volume, very celebrated in its day, called "The Marrow of Modern Divinity." The same feelings which led them to seek religious instruction, made them particular respecting its character. Any new phraseology, or any new mode of explaining divine truth, alarmed them. They found difficulty in accommodating themselves to such views as had begun to develop themselves in some parts of America. The same doctrine explained by unusual methods is often suspected of error. Thus they had strong reason for desiring ministers of their own origin. They had also strong encouragement. The churches which they had planted had greatly increased, and had in many places prepared the way for more. Their success in the city of New York, especially, presented a cheering prospect. The cry for help from the people was heard, and in 1801, the Associate Reformed Synod so responded to it as to send a deputation to Scotland for the purpose of bringing over a supply of young ministers and candidates; and also for the purpose of soliciting aid in establishing a theological seminary—a measure already for several years had in contemplation by the Synod.

June 2, 1801, the following resolutions were adopted at a meeting held in Philadelphia:

"1. That a minister of this church be sent to Great Britain and Ireland, or either of them, to procure a competent number of evangelical ministers and probationers, and that his expenses be defrayed from the Synodical fund.

"2. That he be authorised to secure a number of pious and intelligent students of divinity, who shall engage to repair, after the completion of their studies, to the United States, and place themselves under the direction of this Synod.

"3. That he be further authorised and enjoined to solicit donations in money, for the purpose of erecting and maintaining a Theological Seminary for the education of youth for the holy ministry.

"4. That, according as the monies in his hand shall permit, he be also authorised to purchase a library for said seminary; and a collection of those books which are most needful and useful for this Synod, to be distributed among their ministers and students, as shall hereafter be directed; using the advice and counsel of judicious and godly ministers with regard to the selection; and that he solicit donations in books for both these uses."

On the same day, Mr. Mason was chosen by ballot for this mission; and a letter of instructions was furnished him by the Moderator.

The following letter, in an abridged form, from a member of his church, written before the author of it knew anything of the Synod's decision respecting a mission to Scotland, contains things decidedly favourable to such a measure, and various other matters of interest concerning the state of religion in that country, the character of leading ministers, and the movements of the Tabernacle party :—

TO THE REV. J. M. MASON.

EDINBURGH, 17th July, 1801.

MY BELOVED FRIEND: When I wrote you from Liverpool, it was (as far as I could then see) from a dry and parched desert. I have since come to my native land, and find it, notwithstanding abounding iniquity, a well watered country. The first Sabbath we were in Glasgow, most of the regular clergy were absent, assisting at sacraments; and we went to the Tabernacle, to hear Mr. Ewing. He lectured in the morning and preached in the afternoon. He is a neat, correct, and ingenious preacher, rather than a bold, animated and original one. We were much pleased with his solemnity, and his very evangelical, scriptural, practical prayers in administering the Lord's Supper—which he does every Sabbath.

Glasgow is highly favoured, having nine or ten evangelical ministers: Mr. Balfour, Mr. Lockhart, Mr. Love, (formerly Secretary to the London Missionary Society), Mr. Bigg, and several others, among the established clergy. The most celebrated of all we found to be Mr. Dick, a very eminent man among the Burghers.

Since our arrival here, I have heard Dr. Davidson, Mr. Jones, and David Black. But of all that I have yet heard in this country, take him altogether, Mr. Balfour is my favourite. None of them excel him in spirituality, close application of the truth, or evangelical exposition; and he excels them all in elegance of language, sublimity of thought, and impressive animation, animation which, while it warms both speaker and hearer, is so tempered with judgment, and so blended with humility, as never to discover the least approach to a dictatorial or self-confident spirit.

To this peculiar talent, he owes several seals of his ministry; especially Sir John Sterling, once a very wicked man, but now a spiritual, uniform, zealous Christian. Also Captain and Mrs. Clark. The former was remarkable for his enmity to the gospel, for opposition to its ordinances, and for the profanation of the Sabbath. They were both awakened under the preaching of Mr. Balfour: first the wife, who had been very gay. She prevailed upon her husband to go, and he also was caught. They have now for some years withdrawn from their former dissipations, and, being persons of fortune, have laid themselves under requisition to Mr. Balfour, who gives to every object of beneficence whatever he thinks proper on their account.

I have been agreeably disappointed in finding such very respectable Christian society, both here and at Glasgow. Yet if the Spirit of God is lifting up a standard against the open enemy, Satan, I think, is making his secret, but potent attacks on the hearts of God's own children. The divisions, the innovations, the changes occurring here, and creating disunion among those who agree in the great doctrines of salvation, can be accounted for in no other way. The Tabernacle institution has occasioned the chief ferment. As I have been a good deal in company with both sides, I have endeavoured to form some estimate of their differences, and of their probable results. I trust that Mr. Ewing has acted from conscience. He is at present very zealous, and I hope will be useful. But in the whole of this business, there has been, in my opinion, too much of a human spirit predominant.

This good has resulted from the schism: It has sharpened the edge of exertion among the clergy of all denominations; it has proved the means of preaching Christ in many places where he was not preached, and, as meek Mr. Balfour says, that bitterness which controversy excites will, after a while, subside, and more union will be given to the operations of all.

Mr. Ewing teaches a class of thirty young men a system which I find approved by the clergy, and which they recommend for your use when you shall get a colleague.

I met with Mr. Robert Haldane at his father-in-law's, near Glasgow. He has sold his fine landed estate for seventy thousand guineas, and bought into the fund, for the purpose of being ready to appropriate his money for promoting the interests of religion; and out of an income of six or seven thousand a year, he limits his family to five hundred pounds sterling. All the rest goes to the building and supporting tabernacles, and sending missionaries everywhere. He has them in

Denmark, and feels interested for America. He says that we have the means within ourselves in America, if we had only the spirit. I am to see him again on his return to Edinburgh, and will get him to write to some of you on the subject.

Dr. Davidson (though the most opposed of all the evangelical clergy to the Tabernacle innovation) seemed to think that some of those taught by Mr. Ewing, and who had previously received a classical education, might suit our body. I think otherwise, and should feel averse to introduce men *not confirmed* in their attachment to our system of government. Our hopes at present must be from the burghers. I enclose you a letter receviced from Mr. Smart at Stirling, respecting his brother. There are others also recently licensed, but not so distinguished. Being scattered up and down the country it is impossible for a transient person like me to become sufficiently acquainted with them for our purpose.

Since my arrival here, I am more convinced of the propriety and even necessity of your taking a trip to this country in order to obtain some able young men for our churches, and to arrange a regular correspondence for the same object. I find them affectionately disposed towards us in America. Your remembrance is cherished among them, and they are pleased and interested in your success.

There are several valuable young men coming out in the establishment; but they say, and with justice, too, that they are wanted among themselves. I shall make some bold attacks on young Mr. Smart, but without particular reference to New York, as I think it not improbable that Mr. Young may have been acceptable there. I am extremely anxious to hear on this subject from you.

Since I began this, I have been to hear Mr. James Haldane open the new Tabernacle. While I value his piety and regard him as a signal monument of divine grace, I am now more confirmed in the opinion that the Tabernacle preachers are not fitted for settlement as regular pastors. Though a man of some literary attainments and of sound sense, his style of preaching is better adapted to useful itinerancy than to the building up a church. I am quite at a loss to understand from what motives judicious, food-loving Christians, could leave good

Gospel ministers, such as they have left, to be under the ministry of Mr. Haldane. I wish we had a twelvemonth's tour from him through America. He might be useful in Whitefield's manner. He has not gone so far as Mr. Ewing in one thing. He administers the Lord's Supper only once a month. It is remarkable that he and his brother, with both their wives, were all awakened together.

Your good uncle, Mr. Mason, who is very highly and justly esteemed here, has prevailed on us to take up our abode at his house, which, during a time of tumult—the race week—has been an additional satisfaction to us. His family, except Agnes, are all at Mouse-bank, near Lanark. Mr. Mason was highly pleased and agreeably surprised with Euphemia's letter.

Give my affectionate regards to all our dear Christian brethren, and believe me ever your very affectionate friend and servant,

DIVIE BETHUNE.

P. S.—On reading over what I have written, I think I have given you too harsh a picture of the Tabernacle men, and I must request you to apply my remarks rather against the system, than the persons engaged. Mr. Ewing, who has borne the brunt of the battle, had many things to call forth all his energy in his own defence, and perhaps to tempt his asperity. Many things in the establishment were contrary to his views. When he broke off, they all attacked him. The majority of the General Assembly, being strangers to gracious principles, and no less ignorant of human nature, thought to crush the Tabernacle by the arm of power. This was not effectually opposed by the evangelical ministry. These things tended to rouse in Mr. Ewing any latent sparks of "the old man," and produce acrimony on his part. I say this for fear I may prejudice you against them. What have we, in America, to do with disputes pertaining to establishments, or with departures from them? Let us see to it, that our friends possess the love of Christ. If this constrains them to sell all and follow him—if love for souls moves them to go forth out of the camp, bearing the reproach of our Redeemer, and to employ all their time, energy and substance, in publishing his salvation—let us, forgetting trivial difference, take them to our hearts and bid them God speed. This we may do without imbibing or following what may appear erroneous in their system. Messrs. Haldane and Aickman are certainly precious men of God. Robert Haldane has set a glorious example. Says he, "Much money is laid out for temporal comforts; the benevolent of this world take care of public institutions for the bodies of men, but are not their souls more precious?" He sold one of the most enchanting seats in Scotland, and gave all up, having his wishes centered on "the inheritance of the Saints in light." I love him in my heart for this.

D. B.

CHAPTER VIII.

1801.

MISSION TO SCOTLAND.

Arrival—Reception at Greenock—At Glasgow—At Edinburgh—Meets a Committee—Visits Selkirk—Letter to James Patterson—An Incident—Memorial to the Synod's Committee—Their Action—Visits Stirling—Preaches in Ebenezer Erskine's Pulpit.

PURSUANT to his appointment, Mr. Mason, on the 29th of July, embarked at New York, and on the 2d of September landed at Greenock. His report to the Synod on his return, the next year, together with letters to his friends, give the leading details of his agency while abroad.

The cordiality with which he was received, immediately upon landing, is feelingly described in a confidential letter written at the time. And though the public may have no direct interest in a private correspondence, yet, when such a correspondence supplies some necessary links in a narrative like the present, and at the same time furnishes some of the best indices to the real character of an individual, respecting whom public curiosity is awake, we can hardly render a better service than by inserting portions of it. Indeed the greatest defect of biographies often consists in not disclosing enough of their subjects as they appear in their domestic relations, and in their unguarded moments. We wish to accompany distinguished men into their retirement, and to learn what thoughts and feelings occupy their minds when screened from the keen eye of the world's observation. At any rate, we feel confident that no one who has ever heard of Dr. Mason will have any objection to an occasional peep into his family letters of this period. We begin with the following:—

TO MRS. MASON.

BISHOPTON-HOUSE, ten miles from Greenock,
September 4th, 1801.

THE heart of my beloved Nancy will witness to her the pleasure I experience in finding a conveyance for New York so soon as Monday the 7th inst. Through the unspeakable kindness of God our Saviour, I arrived at Greenock the day before yesterday. The politeness and attention of Captain Reynolds have imposed on me no small obligation. The uninterrupted harmony of the passengers beguiled the hours at sea, and health without the least indisposition, enabled me to enjoy the comforts of my situation. Nothing can exceed the affectionate welcome I received at Greenock. During my stay of a day and a half, the good people vied with each other in their friendly offices to me. I did not know, nor even suspect how much I was indebted to the civilities of Mr. Colin Gillespie. He had given me a letter of introduction to his father, containing three or four lines; but without my knowledge had written to him in a very different style in another letter. You may easily imagine how agreeably I was surprised at finding the old gentleman in Greenock the morning after my landing. On the receipt of Colin's letter, he lost no time, but set out at six o'clock the next morning with his very amiable wife, in their post-chaise, on purpose to bring me to their mansion. He would take neither denial nor delay, but as soon as I had got my baggage on shore, hurried me off, with my friend Tillary, to his seat at Bishopton. This place, which is very beautifully situated on the banks of the Clyde, formerly belonged to Lord Temple, and was purchased by Mr. Gillespie for upwards of 70,000 dollars. His son Richard, and son-in-law, Mr. Sheriff, one of my old acquaintances, came immediately from Glasgow to secure my residence with them, about a mile from that city. They send down for us to-morrow morning. In fact we are almost overwhelmed with their goodness.

Goodness and mercy have followed us all the days of our lives. You will join me in the tribute of thanksgiving to our Father in Heaven for his gracious care of me. For you and our dear babes I have no distrustful anxiety. Having left you all in the hands of Israel's Keeper, *he* is to look after you. The promise is sure—"The Lord will give that which is good." This is enough; may he vouchsafe active faith to live in the *consolation* of it. Kiss the children for me, and tell them I hope they are good, obedient children, and do not forget to read their Bibles, learn their texts, catechisms, and hymns, and to pray.

Your ever affectionate,

JOHN M. MASON.

The day after the last date he went to Glasgow, where he experienced no less kindness, and made the acquaintance of such men as the Rev. John Dick, well known as the author of several Theological works; the Rev. Dr. Robert Balfour, of the High Church, a minister of great excellence and commanding influence, already favourably noticed by Mr. Bethune; and of the Rev. Alexander Pirie, of the Grey-Friar Chapel, also distinguished for his many virtues and useful labours. They were all among those eminent ministers of the Gospel who were ever afterwards remembered by him with the most cordial respect and esteem—feelings which we have reason to know were as cordially reciprocated.

Next we find him embosomed in the warm-hearted welcomes of his relatives in the vicinity of Edinburgh. The following letter will not offend the eye of any who have ever experienced the overflowing of kindred emotions:—

TO MRS. MASON.

EDINBURGH, September 19th, 1801.

I WROTE you, my dearest Nancy, from Bishopton, on the 4th inst. by the *Recovery*, Captain Campbell. I hope you will have received that letter before the arrival of this, as it contained the account of my landing at Greenock, and reception by the good people there. Through infinite mercy my health is continued; and I am as happy with my numerous and affectionate friends as can be conciliated with absence from whatever is most precious to me in this world. From Bishopton I proceeded to Glasgow, on the 5th, and was, so to speak, overwhelmed with kindness. My next route was to Lanark, where my uncle has a beautiful little country seat. I cannot describe the scene when I alighted from my horse. My dear uncle was so affected that he could not speak. He held me a long time in his arms; and I really thought he would have fainted. He did not recover his composure for nearly two days. My aunt, tender, vivacious, and humorous as ever, though much afflicted some time since with bad health, greatly contributed to the relief of us both. While the united and repeated exclamation of O cousin! O cousin! from the three girls, most pleasingly varied the scene. I have not leisure to give you any account at present of that most romantic spot where my uncle's place is—Mousebank. If I do not forget it, I shall do this hereafter. From Mousebank I came to Edinburgh, the 14th inst. All my old friends vied with each other in expressions of affectionate good-will. My public business looks well thus far. I am going in a few minutes for Selkirk, where the Rev. Mr. Lawson instructs the students in Divinity belonging to the Burgher Synod.

You may easily judge my surprise at finding that nearly two-thirds of all the letters I have written to my friends here have never been received, and that they have sent many letters and parcels to me, of which none have come to hand these two years.

Ever affectionately,

JOHN M. MASON.

On reaching Edinburgh he ascertained that the Associate (Burgher) Synod, which had lately met there, anticipating his arrival and purpose, had appointed a Committee to confer with him on the subject of his mission, and to adopt such measures as might appear expedient and proper. With this Committee he had an interview on the 17th September. Accrediting him as a Representative of the Associate Reformed Church, they recommended an immediate visit to the Divinity Hall of the Synod, that he might have an opportunity of conversing with the students before the expiration of the session. He accordingly repaired to Selkirk, and laid before the Professor, the Rev. George Lawson, a memorial as follows:—

SELKIRK, Sept. 24, 1801.

REV. SIR: Being authorized by the Associate Reformed Synod of North America to invite a number of ministers and probationers to labour among their churches in word and doctrine, and to secure, if possible some students of piety and ability, who shall, after completing the requisite course, repair to America with the same intention, and the plan having received the hearty concurrence of the Committee of your Synod, I feel it my duty to present to you, and through you, to your pupils, a brief memorial, which may serve as a basis for their opinions and their conduct.

The church which I represent, formed by a union of ministers and people from both branches of the Secession, and from the Reformed Presbytery, harmonizes with the Burgher Synod, not only in their general principles of doctrine, government, worship and discipline, but also in their more particular views of subjects which have caused unhappy litigation on both sides of the Atlantic. In the steady maintenance of evangelical truth and purity, she has, through the good hand of her God upon her, gone on and prospered. Large accessions of members have been made to her communion, and numerous congregations erected. With much difficulty and many embarrassments, the ordinances of the Gospel have been so far and so successfully dispensed among them, as to prepare them for supporting stated pastors. Though many of them have been settled, yet the increase has been so rapid as to outstrip every effort to meet their wants. At this moment there are, ripe for settlement, about sixteen congregations, which would welcome, with gratitude and joy, the faithful messenger of Jesus Christ. Besides these, there is a much greater number of infant vacancies, which, so far as regards human agencies, require only nurturing to become, in a short time, respectable and flourishing societies. The exigencies of both are pressing, and their applications for supply importunate. No exertion has been omitted on the part of the Synod; but every exertion is inadequate, and every day augments the disproportion between the necessities of their churches and their ability to relieve them. Matters are now brought to a crisis which cannot terminate favourably without an accession of ministerial aid. It would be unreasonable to expect, that settled congregations will endure much longer the absence of their pastors, several months in the year, supplying vacancies. Vacancies themselves must languish under partial and irregular ministrations of the gospel. They do languish; and although many of them have displayed much patience and perseverance, yet, as hope deferred maketh the heart sick, repeated disappointments will at last shake the firmest purpose, and despondence succeeding to trial, will either alienate their minds, or, what is worse, break up their society altogether. Nor is this melancholy issue without example. In short, the Synod is placed in that most awkward and afflicting situation in which it is almost alike hazardous to stop, or to proceed. The consequences, therefore, of failure in the mission with which I have the honour to be entrusted, will in all probability, be such as cannot be anticipated without dismay, because they will be such as no human expedient will remain to avert. A considerable number of ministers is, of course, indispensable. The Synod indeed, contemplate as an object of the utmost importance, and which they will spare no pains to accomplish, the erection of a seminary for training up youth for the holy ministry. But it is obvious that if they should succeed in the *immediate* execution of their design, several years must elapse before its fruits can be matured. Even those ministers or probationers who may now consent to embark for America, will afford but a temporary, though a most seasonable relief. In the mean time new congregations are preparing for pastors, much more rapidly than pastors can be prepared for them. I have therefore to request, in behalf of our American churches, that students in the several periods of the course observed in the Hall over which you preside, would seriously consider, and, in their most solemn and spiritual hours, would spread before the throne of God, the apparent call of His providence to repair, at the expiration of their term of study, to the United States, and be fellow-workers with Him in building up His temple in that great continent.

As it is to be hoped that none of your students think of the Christian ministry from any other principle than experience of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, in its living efficacy upon their hearts, and an honest intention of glorifying Him, not seeking their own profit, but the profit of many that they may be saved; so I beg leave, dear sir, to assure them, in the most explicit manner, that no others are desired by any of our churches. Such as are willing to spend and be spent in the service of the blessed Jesus, resolved to follow him through good and through bad report, contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints—such as are reconciled to his cross and will not refuse to venture their persons and their hopes upon His finished work, His gracious, and His unutterable love—such as are decisively attached to the Presbyterian system of church government, as his ordinance, will be received with open arms, and cherished, I trust, with Christian affection.

The inducement which I have to offer them is not the ease or opulence of this world. It is the prospect of usefulness in the church of God, usefulness more extensive perhaps than can be expected in any other situation. It is the sacred heroism of denying themselves, and braving difficulty, reproach, and peril, for the name of Jesus. It is that recompense of reward which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will bestow upon them, who, from love to his salvation, from obedience to his will, from tender compassion to the souls of men, can forego every other consideration, and, with something of the spirit of an apostle, set themselves for the defence of the gospel. Whoever wish to preach Christ in America, must cast themselves upon His word and providence for their worldly weal. Yet, while I make these frank declarations, that no man may be deceived by false expectations, I feel safe in expressing a persuasion that the exchange, even in respect of temporal comfort, will, in many instances, be found advantageous, and that there is little danger of its turning out for the worse in any.

On this subject, Rev. and dear Sir, the deepest anxieties of our churches are interested. Of your cordial coöperation in every proper manner and extent, the experience I have already had of your good-will does not permit me to doubt. Impediments, I am aware, will arise; natural attachment to country and home—the reluctance of dear relatives—the machinations of the adversary, who will not fail to employ all his address and malignity to defect whatever bodes ill to his reign of darkness—will create trouble and conflict to the most disinterested and intrepid. Yet my hope is, that as the dispensation of Providence, which has occasioned the present application, is singular and pointed; as it is not the first time that God has commanded his servants: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house;" as obstacles are often thrown in their way to try their faith and love. Every resistance will yield to the sentence of the master: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." And while the voice from the holiest of all, demands: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" a goodly number of those whose heart God hath touched, will, without hesitation, reply, "Here am I, send me."

With the most unfeigned esteem,

J. M. MASON.

"This memorial," his Report continues, "the Professor communicated to the students, and, entering heartily into the views which it developes, supported them with his own influence, and afterwards wrote a paper, enforcing in the most earnest manner, the request of the Associate Reformed Church. The intercourse which, during several days, I had with the students, and the specimens of correct principle, literary acquirement, and pulpit talent, which they exhibited in the exercises delivered during my stay at Selkirk, made me more anxious than before to engage a number of them for the service of our churches. But as an immediate decision on so important a proposition was not to be expected, I submitted it to their deliberation, and returned to Edinburgh."

The tenor of his conversations with the students at Selkirk may be inferred from the following letter addressed to one of them, who had given his consent to go, though afterwards prevented by an insidious disease which at last proved fatal:—

TO MR. JAMES PATTERSON.

MY DEAR SIR: The emotions which you connect with the idea of leaving country and kindred, are such as naturally affect an ingenuous mind; and your determination, such as I was inclined to augur from one who has learned to sacrifice every other consideration to the honour of our redeeming God. I tender you my thanks, dear Sir, for taking the lead in a service so disinterested as that which my proposition to you contemplates. I hope that no untoward circumstance will occur either to shake your resolution, or hinder you from executing it. I hope also, that your example, and the self-denial of your aged father, will not be without their influence upon other young men who are attached to you by the ties both of religious study and personal regard; as well as upon parents and relatives who cannot be called to harder sacrifices than your own.

With respect to your questions, which are altogether proper, accept the following answers:

The Congregations now ripe for settlement in our connexion are distributed over a great part of the States. They and the younger vacancies are to be found in New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee. Five are in populous cities; seven in flourishing towns; several in thickly settled places in the country; some also in a more secluded situation. These, however, are principally in new settlements which meliorate their condition every day. The people are strongly attached to the peculiar doctrine of the Gospel and to Presbyterial church government. Irregular sectaries make very little impression upon our congregations. You can easily form an opinion of their general habits when you know that a great proportion of them come from your own connexion. They are surrounded with error and infidelity. The preachers usually receive their appointments from the Presbytery to which they belong; but they are often directed by the Synod which has the paramount authority. They are not at much expense in supplying vacancies, and receive compensation for their labours, but this, you will observe must vary with the situation of vacancies as they are more or less advanced. The exact provision which congregations make for their ministers, I cannot state, but from every inquiry, think it does not average less, but rather more than is common among the churches of the Secession. It is usually paid in money, though there is frequently added to the pecuniary maintenance, an engagement to furnish some articles of prime necessity, such as *fuel.* In the new settlements, if I do not mistake, land accompanies the stipend. At any rate it is cheap there; and so is subsistence. The greatest inconvenience which a minister encounters on this score is irregular payment in some country places. His congregation is sometimes composed of parts which do not lie contiguous, and among which he divides his labours on terms of agreement entered into when he receives his call. To be useful and beloved in our churches, a minister must preach plainly and faithfully, and apply to the consciences of his hearers the downright, Marrow doctrines of the Confession and Catechisms. He must "*know nothing among them but Jesus Christ and him crucified.*" His soul must be in his Master's work, and there will be no danger of his being unacceptable.

J. M. MASON.

On his return to Edinburgh, Mr. Mason preached before "the Society for the Relief of Destitute Sick," his sermon entitled "Living Faith;" which was published, and may be found in the first volume of his Works.

The popularity which he had attained may be illustrated by an occurrence reported by one who witnessed the scene. As he preached on a Sabbath forenoon in one of the churches of the city, it was understood that in the afternoon he was to exchange with the Rev. Mr. P. Though most of his hearers had heard nothing of him before, they were all so completely carried away with his eloquence, that immediately on the close of the service, by a general impulse they rushed over and filled Mr. P.'s church, and actually waited there during the whole of the intermission, in order to make sure of the afternoon hearing. When the congregation of the latter assembled they were surprised to find their seats occupied, and to be coolly told that their own minister (whom they greatly loved and admired) was to preach at the other place, where they might hear him!

After his visit to Selkirk, Mr. Mason gave the Committee at Edinburgh a copy of his memorial to the Professor, and accompanied it with an additional communication, as follows:—

TO THE REV. JAMES HALL, CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE ASSOCIATE SYNOD.

REV. SIR: I do myself the honour to enclose, for the perusal of your Committee, a copy of a paper which I lately presented to the Rev. Professor Lawson. Besides the considerations which are therein addressed to the students, I beg leave to suggest a few others, which may tend to impress more strongly upon the minds of the Committee, the importance of the objects which my mission contemplates.

Many of the congregations which are now waiting for pastors, and the greater number of vacancies not yet matured, are in those parts of the United States which have been recently settled. An inviting climate and a fertile soil must, in the ordinary course of things, attract thither multitudes of new inhabitants. This circumstance, added to the facility of procuring subsistence, which is one of the most powerful causes of increase in the human species, will shortly produce a population incredible to those who are not acquainted with existing facts. In this view, the *Western* countries especially, of America, present a subject of most interesting speculation to the philosopher and to the Christian. The importance of instilling into the early societies which are erected there, sound religious principles, and of training them up in correct moral habits, is too evident to require proof. And although no denomination of Christians may be able to do as much as could be wished for the attainment of this end, yet the effects resulting ultimately from the exertions of any one of them may far exceed the most sanguine expectation. Every congregation under the care of an evangelical pastor, becomes a centre, from which the influence of the Gospel is more or less diffused. New societies, collecting by degrees, naturally assume the form and imbibe the principles of those in whose vicinity they are erected. Under such circumstances, truth has at least a wider range, and a fairer prospect of success, than in places where discordant professions have descended, by inheritance, from sire to son, and being incorporated with their habits, both restrict their intercourse and control their opinions.

Proportional to the magnitude of the object is the necessity for *workmen who need not be ashamed.* The popular opinion, that any sincere and orthodox preacher is competent to plant new churches, and water such as have been lately planted, has done infinite mischief to the Christian cause, as congregations first formed will probably be models for others, too much care cannot be employed in organizing them according to the scriptural pattern.

A consideration of serious moment in regard to the Associate

Reformed Church is, that though of recent establishment, she is growing in numbers and repute. Societies, like individuals, being flexile in their infancy, but of difficult correction in their advanced years, it is all-important to a rising church, that her ministry be intelligent as well as pure. It will not only be her strength and ornament, but will fix a proper standard of ministerial character for times to come. Men who are themselves *scribes well instructed in the kingdom of God*, will have both the inclination and ability to see that their successors partake of their capacities and acquisitions. And it is too obvious to admit of dispute, that, other things being equal, the ablest ministry will do most honour to the gospel, and most benefit to the souls of men. On the other hand, the effects of an illiterate, inefficient ministry have been too severely felt in many parts of the church not to be deprecated by all who understand and love her peace.

The rank which America must one day hold among the nations, renders her political and moral institutions of general concern. Of this infidel reformers are aware; and in no quarter of the world have her emissaries been more active in disseminating their poison. They know too, that there is little hope of overturning Christianity, and of inflicting upon the world those plagues which would follow her ruin, so long as her ministry retains its respectability and influence. This, of course, must encounter their most inveterate hostility; and hence arises an additional reason for ministerial ability. The Committee cannot fail to perceive the conclusion which I wish them to draw, that the churches I represent, have a claim upon their sister churches here, for preachers of *talent* as well as piety.

As local separation cannot alter the nature of truth, or destroy the communion of saints, I cherish the hope that your reverend body will consider, as their own, the interests of the Associate Reformed Synod. An effectual door of usefulness being opened for them, and the promotion of the Redeemer's kingdom being the common object, it is a matter of inferior moment to both, on which side of the Atlantic he is glorified. If *His* church prosper, all will rejoice. In sending one of her ministers to represent her necessities on the spot, the Associate Reformed Church has given the strongest proof in her power, that she is in serious earnest. By seconding her application, as far as propriety shall permit, your Committee will, no doubt, render essential service.

That there may be no mistake as to temporal views, I am solicitous, dear Sir, to repeat the declaration made to Professor Lawson, that whoever go to preach the gospel in America must be governed by a sense of duty, and a supreme regard to the Redeemer's glory, leaving implicitly to his gracious providence their earthly destination; so that no reproach may be incurred either by myself or the Synod to which I belong, as having used, for the accomplishment of our wishes, any means inconsistent with the openness and candour of Christians.

With unfeigned respect, yours, &c.,

J. M. MASON.

Edinburgh, Nov. 10, 1801.

The Committee after deliberating on the subject, were unanimously of opinion, that for an object of such magnitude, "they ought to coöperate with Mr. Mason by all the means in their power."

Some further particulars in this connexion, together with other matters of interest, may be found in the following letter:—

TO MRS. MASON.

GLASGOW, Nov. 28, 1801.

YOUR own heart, my beloved Nancy, will best interpret the emotions of mine on the arrival of your most welcome letters. Blessed be the Lord our God for his watchfulness over me and mine. He has always enabled me to commit my family implicitly and unreservedly to his care, and I have never found cause to repent my confidence. He will preserve you still. Among the millions of thoughts which the images of all I hold most dear in this world, call up every hour to my mind, I am not conscious of any *anxiety*. The tranquility of *trust* in my Heavenly Father has hitherto, in the midst of all my provocations, been my privilege. It shall be so, and be yours also, I hope to the *end*.

Never had a stranger better reason to eulogise Scottish hospitality than myself. From ministers and private Christians of various denominations; the Establishment, the Secession, the Tabernacle, I have been honoured with the warmest expressions of regard. Their numerous attentions have, in fact, often subjected me to inconvenience. Since my arrival I have in a great measure, led the life of a pilgrim. I have visited Selkirk, the seat of the Divinity Hall, belonging to the Burgher Seceders. My next route was to Stirling, the venerable place of Ebenezer Erskine's ministry. There I preached in the very pulpit from which his gracious lips used to proclaim the gospel "in its dignity and glory." I cannot describe the emotions which worked in my breast when I considered the spot, the building, the people, the place before the pulpit where his revered ashes are interred. Every thing affected me. There are yet, in the pulpit on one side, a little shelf on which he laid his snuff-box, on the other, another shelf which held his pocket-bible, and just under it, a moveable arm, on which he reclined his aged head. The congregation present were about 3,000. Yesterday eight days I returned from Stirling, and on Tuesday last came again to this place to visit and enlarge my circle of acquaintance, previously to a third visit, which is to open a campaign for the needful.

There is every appearance that neither myself nor our churches will have reason to regret my mission to Great Britain. The general aspect of things, the particular season, and other circumstances, conspire, I think, to prove the measure a wise and happy one. I have seen a thousand confirmations of the opinions which I entertained and expressed at home, that nothing could have been done by letters. The Burghers on whom my expectations principally rest, enter with spirit into our views, and are willing, which was more perhaps than could have been expected, to give us the *best* of their young men. It is too soon to form an opinion of the extent of my success; but a comfortable beginning encourages me to be sanguine.

Nothing has more amused me than the vexation which my friends among the ministers of the Establishment express under the restraint of an act of the General Assembly. This act, levelled perhaps at the new Independents, who are also called Tabernacle men, prohibits them from employing in their pulpits any minister who cannot accept a presentation in the Church of Scotland. They are very solicitous that I should preach for them, but their hands are tied up. "That wicked act," exclaimed Mr. Balfour. "That stupid act," cried Dr. Kemp. "That nonsensical act," added Mr. Jones. "What a pity!" "How foolish!" "How unkind!" said good Mr. Bonar, clasping his hands together, and lifting his angel face toward heaven. "I am a man under authority," uttered Mr. Love, with the profoundest gravity. By the way, their restriction is a most convenient one for me. I have ample employment as it is. Not a Sabbath has passed without my preaching since I landed, except the first.

But in the midst of all these agreeable things I sigh for my home and my people. Long and heavy-footed are the months which are to bring back the joyous hour of my return. When the Lord vouchsafes that happiness, I hope he will enable us to improve it with more than wonted tenderness and gratitude. All his dispensations are wise and good. He teaches us, by temporary separation, to learn our entire dependence, and to appreciate the continuance of those mercies which he is under no obligation to confer. He warns to prepare for that hour when the barrier between us shall not be the Atlantic Ocean. How transporting the thought, that 3,000 miles are no impediment to meeting and communion at the mercy-seat. How infinitely more transporting the assurance, that a little, very little time can, at furthest, intervene, between the endearments of believing relatives on earth, and their eternal fellowship in the kingdom of God. To this let our souls aspire. That we may not only be "mete for the inheritance of the Saints in light," but may have "an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." His consolations be with your spirit!

CHAPTER IX.

1802.

RESULTS.

Letter to Mr. Bethune—To Mrs. Mason—To Mr. James Robson—Appears before the Burgher Synod at Edinburgh—Its effect—Church Communion restored.

Towards the close of 1801 we left Mr. M. at Edinburgh. While there, he was taken sick and confined several weeks. The rest of his time was diligently occupied in efforts to secure in various ways, and at different places, the objects for which he was sent. The beginning of the next year finds him still in Scotland. His movements and feelings at this period may be somewhat traced in various letters to his friends.

TO MR. DIVIE BETHUNE.

Edinburgh, Feb. 2nd, 1802.

My Dear Friend: I have just seen a letter from Mrs. G. to Mrs. Walker. She is up, riding on her high places; but it is all from her expectation that glorious successes are about to attend the Gospel. She reckons much on the commotions in Kentucky. They are very wonderful, but very, very suspicious. I have read an account transmitted by Mr. Steele, in Kentucky, to Mr. Young, who supplied us at New York. He was an eye-witness. But the horrible confusion and frenzy, mingled with gross ignorance, and sometimes impiety of expression, which distinguish the throng, should make us very cautious how we say, this is the finger of God. But, my friend, these things place in an increasing light the importance of my mission to Great Britain, and of a proper establishment for ministerial education. America is in unspeakable danger of being overrun by declaimers, whose zeal without knowledge will, in the issue, do more mischief to the church of Christ than the enmity of open foes.

I enclose one of the papers which are circulating among friends here. You need no directions what use to make of it. But we must *strive* to obtain so much pecuniary aid, as shall give a spring to the exertions of our people at home.

On Saturday, the 6th, I set out, God willing, for Glasgow, and propose to remain in the west about four weeks. I design to return the first week in March, at the furthest.

TO MRS. MASON.

GREENOCK, March 2nd, 1802.

YOUR very welcome letter, my love, dated December 22nd, reached me toward the end of January, and a few days after your letter of the 27th October. By the *Fanny* I heard of you and our dear family, in a letter from Mr. Loudon, the 9th of January. My heart is filled with tenderness—I hope with gratitude also—when I think of the mercies which our heavenly Father has heaped upon me and mine. How wonderful is His loving-kindness. He still observes the same method of subduing my obduracy, and putting my sins to shame which I have often mentioned to you—overwhelming me with His goodness. I desire to bless Him for His graciousness to you, in giving you so much of His support and consolations; a precious proof that we shall never make a sacrifice for His name which He will not amply compensate. His care of you, and of the congregation, joined to the favour which He has granted me to find in the eyes of His people here, more and more satisfy my conscience that my mission is from Him, and that He will prosper it, and render it the means of good to His church in the United States.

The impossibility of determining, for some time, what supplies I can reckon upon, in Scotland, makes it problematic whether I shall be able to visit Ireland or not. It would be extremely unwise to go to another country without a specific object. I cannot even surmise how many preachers we shall want from Ireland, before I know how many are to be obtained in Scotland; and my crossing over to the former, while my progress is uncertain in the latter, would create so much doubt as to the proportion to be furnished by each, as perhaps to frustrate, in a great measure, my reasonable expectations from both. I am afraid that by the time I wind up my business in this country, there will be no leisure for doing much in another. This, however, by the way. . . . It may turn out otherwise.

I had hoped to return with a Spring ship; this sweet hope, however, cannot be realized. Matters are far from being ripe enough to permit my leaving Britain at present without essential injury to my public business. However joyfully I would see unfurled the sails of the vessel in which I am to embark for *home*, I cannot reconcile with a sense of duty the relinquishment of the trust reposed in me, before all the means have been used, and time employed, which offer a reasonable prospect of success. You must not, therefore, look for me sooner than the beginning of September. Nothing which my exertions can prevent shall keep me beyond that time from the bosom of my dear family.

The negotiations at Amiens for a definite treaty of peace, drag on heavily. A thousand speculations are afloat. Some even assert that the negotiations will, after all, be broken off. As I am not in the secrets of the Cabinet I can say nothing about the matter. Yet it is shrouded in mystery. One can hardly avoid suspecting that everything is not exactly right. In the mean time it is certain that a most wonderful change has passed upon the opinions of multitudes concerning the preliminaries. Anxiety for peace and the surprise of its arrival, produced a burst of exultation and enthusiasm which precluded inquiry, and carried completely away the mass of the nation. Since the tumult has subsided, and men have grown cool, their views have altered. At least, as far as my observation reaches, this is the fact even with those who at first were most ardent in their approbation. What the event will be, God only knows; but there appears little reason to hope that the peace will be permanent. I wish and pray that the sanguine calculations of our President on that subject may not prove illusory.

My love to the dear children. Tell them that I think of them and pray for them every day. They must not neglect their catechism and texts as they have been accustomed. Euphemia must be attentive to her needle, as I shall bring some work for her. Mamma Mason and Mother Lefferts will accept my affectionate remembrance. Join with them our good friends at Hackinsack. The list at New York is too numerous to particularize. Distance does not diminish the attachment which I fondly cherished when among them. Tell them so when they ask about me. Do not forget to make my cordial congratulations to Dr. I. R. B. Rodgers and his *spouse*. Long may they live in peace, blessing and blessed.

I am much gratified with the attention of the servants. Give them my thanks for it. I do not forget them, and am persuaded that they will persevere in their duties and affections. Tell Angus to be industrious at his books. The Lord bless you. Unceasingly, your affectionate

JOHN M. MASON.

TO MRS. MASON.

EDINBURGH, March 9th, 1802.

I WROTE to you, my dear Nancy, on the 2d, from Greenock, by the *William and Margaret*. Lest that letter miscarry, I send a few lines by another vessel. The cold which I formerly mentioned as having seized me, is quite removed.

Difficulties which it is not in my power to overcome, prohibit my departure for America, till the next voyage of the vessels which are now about sailing. This will be the end of July or the beginning of August. The issue of my application for preachers cannot be known before the meeting of the Burgher Synod, which will be held in this city the last week of April.

I mentioned that great mystery hung over the negotiations at Amiens about the definitive treaty of peace. It is foolish for those who have no access to the sources of authentic information to speak peremptorily. But if I may judge from present appearances, the conclusion of a peace is very dubious. It is certain that orders have been issued for not paying off the ships of war, for putting into commission those that were paid off, and manning and victualling them for six months. Ship carpenters and other nautical mechanics are busy in repairs, and a hot press for seamen is going on at the Thames. Such at least is the uniform, uncontradicted news from London. I had heard it asserted that the negotiations at Amiens are actually broken off, and that war is again at the door; whether this is true I do not pretend to say, but the prospect is black. There are also some indications of a new combination on the Continent. The enormous accession of power to Bonaparte in Italy has alarmed his neighbours, and, it is said, given rise to some manœuvres towards a league between Prussia and the Emperor of Germany. This is the report. Of its truth I know nothing, but it is not improbable. God only, who sees the end from the beginning, can tell what is to follow. You know that it has been long my expectation that the world is not to enjoy much solid peace till the Prince of Peace shall come to reign gloriously. May my apprehensions turn out to be false and groundless! Yet they are, that speedily, if not immediately, the sword is again to be unsheathed, and rivers of human blood are again to flow. Oh for that blessed period when the Son of God shall command wars to cease to the ends of the earth! Nothing but his power in the prevalence of his gospel *can* exterminate them.

Your ever affectionate,

JOHN M. MASON.

TO MRS. MASON.

EDINBURGH, March 11, 1802.

ALTHOUGH I wrote on the 2d and the 9th insts., yet, as I am making up another package for New York, I cannot deny myself the pleasure of dropping another line to my beloved Nancy. I have, indeed, little more to add to my former communications, than the satisfaction of holding another silent converse with her, after the interval of two days. Often, very often, do the dear images of those whom I have left at New York, pass in reiterated succession before my mind. Reverie transports me to No. 9 Pine street, and I sport with my charming boys and girls, while their dear mother looks on, when some untoward incident dissipates the illusion, and by sober reality proves that I am three thousand miles from them. Well! however foolish the vagaries of fancy, life would be insipid without its faculty of wandering. Gone were some of my most delicious moments, if there were no speedier passage over the Atlantic than the sluggish vehicles of commerce. Oh how tardily move those leaden-footed hours which are to bring on the moment of my departure for home. Home! Every nerve thrills at the joyous sound. All the kindnesses and caresses of friends which, here and there, are not a few, only make me more keenly sensible of the delights of my fireside. If aught of strange or foreign could compensate the want of this, I had forgotten ere now the bliss of Pine street. My heart pants for the hour of my return. Yet I am not dejected nor anxious. I know that he to whom I committed you and your children will not disappoint my confidence. Cheering, divinely cheering, is the Christian's privilege: the humble but elevated hope, that he who sits upon the heavens, is my God, my brother; that he employs the celestials from his throne to watch over the family which he has given me, and which I have confided to his care. But when we recollect that all the prerogatives of godliness in this life are nothing to its advantages in the life to come, that there the days of our mourning shall be ended and the Lord shall be our everlasting light, and our God our glory; what, O, what, shall we say! Is this the manner of man, O, Lord God? In the sweet consolations of his covenant may it be our happiness to walk through the world, and to step out of it. To his grace I commit you. Love to the children, and the grandmamas. Once more adieu.

Mr. Mason's expostulations with Mr. James Robson, whom he particularly desired to come with him to America, as expressed in the following letter, further indicate the earnestness and zeal with which he prosecuted his mission:—

TO MR. JAMES ROBSON.

EDINBURGH, March 20, 1802.

MY DEAR SIR: Nothing short of a refusal the most peremptory and persevering, will extinguish my expectation of calling you brother in the Western world. If I have not misunderstood you, the hindrance to your compliance does not lie in your own inclinations, but in the difficulty of determining whether, all circumstances considered, especially the opposition of your friends and beloved mother, the general call of Divine Providence is directed particularly to you. My dear Sir, *what* evidence would satisfy you on this point? A particular revelation is out of the question, as much, I am persuaded, with respect to your own desire, as it is in fact. I have *no doubt* myself. Let us put together those providential incidents from which we must collect an intimation of the divine will, and see if they lead to no conclusion with regard to your personal duty.

That there is a general call, and a loud one, for *some* preachers to go to America, is not disputed. But a general call is the basis of a particular one. And if every individual may decline it for himself, it will turn out to be a nullity. The question then is, who will comply with it? The very *willingness* of any individual, stamps upon the general call the character of particularity. In both these views, therefore, the call of God's providence is to *you.* But let me add, that from the moment I opened mycommission till this hour, every Christian acquaintance of yours, whom I have had the pleasure of seeing, fixed upon you without the least hesitation. Their attachments to you are so respectful and decided that nothing but a conviction which rebukes prejudice and imposes silence upon wish, could have conducted them to this opinion. The knowledge also which I have of you, warrants my confidence that if you shall go to America, you will be destined to no inferior usefulness. Our churches *need* your services, my dear Sir, yours in a particular manner; and you must not say us nay. In fine, to urge what I formerly only hinted, *much depends* upon your acceptance of our invitation. It is not idle compliment. It is no vague conjecture, it is a well founded assurance, that others of high promise to our prosperity will probably join with you in embracing or rejecting our proposal. Your refusal will go further towards discouraging and defeating my efforts, than that of any other young man in Scotland. Can you reconcile, my friend, to your own heart, a measure which tends to frustrate a plan allowed to be great and good, and supported by the call of holy Providence?

When I sum up these things, when I consider that the command of our master, manifested in his Providence, to assist the American churches, is unequivocal and strong; that the agent for these churches has, from no improper motive surely, fixed upon you as a particularly desirable acquisition; that his opinion is backed by the voice of all those ministers and private Christians who are best qualified to judge; that your own inclinations are not hostile; that your acquiescence will be a material benefit, and your refusal a material injury to an attempt, which, in its results may affect the Church of Christ to an extent at present incalculable: when I consider these things, can I doubt that if there is one person to whom more than another the call of Divine Providence renders a mission to America, matter of pointed and imperious duty, that person is JAMES ROBSON.

To the force of this representation you, my dear Sir, are not insensible. But your friends, your mother, your affectionate and revered mother, cannot be conciliated. I feel your straits, and sympathize with you in your conflict. Forever venerable be a mother's wishes. Tender, indeed, are the cords which bind her to the son of her vows; nor let me touch them but with the most respectful and delicate hand. Yet as I am informed that she is not a stranger to religious principle, I will venture to expostulate. Is there any sacrifice too costly for him who sacrificed himself, and was baptized in the baptism of his own blood, for her? Would she choose that a believing son should not be ready to *die* for the name of the Lord Jesus? and shall she be unwilling to let him go for that name, not to death, but to another part of his vineyard? Did she, did you, did any of your friends, stipulate with the great God our Saviour, that you should serve him in the gospel, not where *he*, but where *you*, should direct? Shall a Christian parent and a Christian son do less for promoting the eternal salvation of men, and the eternal glory of God in them, than even Christian parents and their most affectionate sons do every day for acquiring this world? How many religious people permit their children to go, in quest of a *fortune*, among all the natural and moral perils of the East and West Indies? and will your mother not permit you to go among *fellow Christians* for the nobler purpose of assisting them in displaying the unsearchable riches of Christ? Is it not to a great sacrifice that great promises are made? If your yearning mother and your dear friends will consent to your leaving them, may they not, may *she* not, especially, enter her claim upon her Maker, her *husband*, whose name is the Lord of Hosts, to be better to her than ten sons? If they hinder you, will they incur no hazard of reproof? Is it not an easy thing for God to blast all their comfort in a relation whom they would not surrender to him for a distant service? Can he not tear you away from them by death? Can he not subject you to affliction which will both lay you aside from the labours of the sanctuary, and rend their own hearts with long and hopeless anguish? Can he not withhold his gracious influence from your ministrations, send drought and famine into their souls, and withdraw the consolations which they might have in *him*, because they would bear no interruption in the consolations which are to be enjoyed in man? After all, in what does the enjoyment of our friends consist? Chiefly in our complacency in their persons, and our knowledge of their welfare. The pleasure of "face to face," make but a few spots in the track of life. We cannot expect to have them always near us. And if they be so far away as to preclude that frequency of personal intercourse, which is not embittered by the pang of new separation, the effect of a greater distance is merely imaginary.

I pray you to excuse my importunity. I am in serious earnest. To the awards of heaven I desire to submit. But my impressions must greatly alter, if I shall not receive your final rejection of the overture which I have made to you in the name of our churches, as a dark and frowning dispensation. Write as soon as convenient, for I am anxious.

J. M. MASON.

Whatever may have been the effect of the measures pursued by the Synod's Committee referred to in former pages, it was not such as to supersede the necessity of bringing the subject before the whole Synod at their next annual meeting. Accordingly when the Committee presented their report, together with the papers received by Professor Lawson and themselves, on the 28th April, Mr. Mason was introduced to that venerable assembly, and was permitted to address them.

The result was, that, in the language of their minutes, "the Synod heartily approved the course of the Committee, and thanked them for their services; and, after considering the principles and order of the Associate Reformed Church in America, agreed to recognize her as a sister church, and resolved to comply with her application for a supply of ministers, to the utmost of their power." At the same time they took measures for placing the call directly before the minds of about thirty individuals whom they designated for the service.

It is worthy of remark here, that this was the first formal act by which the Secession Church in America, in its united form, received any countenance or favour from the judicatories of Scotland. That church fellowship, which had been judicially taken away from the father in 1780, was in 1802 restored to the son.

His own account of his reception, is given in the following language taken from his report:

"I cannot express the obligations imposed upon me, by the very liberal and elegant reception with which, as your representative, I was honoured by that reverend court. Nothing can exceed the frankness, affection, and zeal, with which they manifested their interest in the Associate Reformed Church, and their desire to promote her prosperity."

CHAPTER X.

1802.

VISITS LONDON.

His chief burden—Accepts an invitation to preach in the Metropolis—"Messiah's Throne"—Very popular—Last Sabbath in London—Letters to Mrs. M.—Letter to Mrs. Brown—Liberal Contributions—Returns to Edinburgh—Visits Ireland—"First Ripe Fruits"—Parting words to a Friend.

A STILL more important matter occupied Mr. Mason's mind. Deeply as he felt the importance of an evangelical ministry for the best interests of his rising country, and highly as he valued the supplies which might sooner or later be received from abroad, he saw most clearly that our main dependence must be placed upon institutions for training young ministers at home. However excellent or even superior might be the means of education in foreign seats of learning, he saw clearly that they could not be so well adapted to our circumstances. A lingering attachment to their native soil could not be easily overcome, even in such as might be persuaded to emigrate; the ideas, the habits, the peculiarities, the feelings and predilections, which insensibly grow up with men in the land of their nativity, are not easily dismissed; the many additional expenditures which must necessarily attend the translation of labourers to a distant field; the prejudices to be encountered, the customs to be accommodated, the institutions to be studied, the many things to be learned, and the many to be unlearned by foreigners in every new sphere; were enough to convince him that recourse must be had to domestic training by the American churches, before they could be either adequately or permanently supplied. There was probably no subject on which, during the whole of his remarkable ministry, he so earnestly set his heart, as upon this. His strongest desire, not to call it ambition, was to lay the foundation of a seminary which might prove a perennial fountain of blessings to the churches of America, especially those of his own denomination. This being one of the objects embraced in his commission, he lost no opportunity of shaping his course for its accomplishment. Among the things most needed for it were funds and books. As the churches of his connexion were comparatively poor, he felt both warranted and impelled in conformity with the wishes of his Synod, to solicit contributions elsewhere. Accordingly, during the intervals of transactions already referred to, and as far as prudence and propriety permitted, he urged forward this business. It was among the weightiest considerations which induced him to accept an invitation for preaching their annual sermon before the London Missionary Society, at the metropolis in the month of May.

It was on this occasion that he preached his celebrated sermon entitled, 'Messiah's Throne'—a discourse which at once made him almost an idol in London, and did much to raise the reputation of American eloquence in England. It served to bring upon him very importunate applications from every quarter. Though under the necessity of declining most of them, he preached very often, and always to thronged assemblies.

Of those who heard him, not a few retained very vivid impressions of his discourses as long as they lived. One of them speaks of his having "enraptured his cotemporaries of the great capital." Another, who was connected with the Baptist Church, remarked in 1853, a distance of 51 years, that "as long as life lasts, the recollection of him and his services will be among my most pleasing remembrances." A third, who was not personally acquainted with him, to inquiries on the subject by a friend, replies, February 21, 1852: "You wish me to do what I can by the way of reminiscence of that great man, Dr. Mason. Be assured, *his memory* needs it not; but you do, and gladly will I aid you as far as I can. I have, you know, skeletons of some of his sermons, in manuscript, preached here in 1802. They are, though skeletons, truly marvellous, and I have lent them to *experienced ministers*, as models, until I have more than once had great difficulty in recovering the book. . . . . My *impressions* of the great man, are more reverential than I can express. Hall was sublime, but Mason majestic. The grandeur of his conceptions was sustained by the dignity of his utterance. Every feature of his countenance and its very pallor, aided the impression, while—to use the language of an eloquent writer—whenever he stood up, 'you felt that you had a great preacher before you. His voice became a very trumpet of grandeur and exultation, and you might have fancied yourself in the presence of one of the sons of Aaron, calling out to the host of the people from some platform occupied by the Prophets.' Is this the language of extravagance? Not in your ear, I am well persuaded."

"It was on the evening of July 4th," writes another, "that my father for the first time heard Mr. Mason, at Eagle street, from the words, 'How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?' and he says never can he forget the impression which that sermon made upon him. From that time, with only one exception, he heard all the sermons he preached in London. On the 11th July, he preached at Miles lane, from 1 Tim. i. 1, 'The Lord Jesus our hope.' On the 25th July, at Artillery lane, from 1 John, v. 12, 'He that hath the Son, hath life.' Same day evening, at Camden Chapel, Heb. ii. 10. The last Sabbath he was in London, August 1, 1802, he preached in the morning at Orange street, from Hebrews x. 19–22; and in the evening, at Whites row, Spitalfields, from 2 Pet. i. 11, and those who were then privileged to hear him, can *never* forget their feelings. Before the close of the sermon, the shades of evening had drawn on, and the solemnity of the occasion can only be imagined by those who knew Mr. Mason, as by his deep-toned and earnest voice, amid the surrounding gloom, he concluded in these words: 'Here time and place separate personal intercourse, but break not attachments. It is but a little while that we can see each other in this world. Thanks be to God, we shall meet yonder. *There*, there shall be no change. *There*, there shall be no interruption. There we shall not lament the anguish of forming acquaintance and Christian connexions only to be broken. Our hopes, our spirits, our prospects are on high! and, blessed be God, the kingdom is there also. And there, my brethren, may you who are hearers, and may he who now, in all probability for the last time in this world, addresses you, meet, when the mystery of God shall be finished, when the trump of God shall sound, and when the angel of God shall swear by Him who liveth forever and ever that time shall be no longer.' On the next day he left London."

Of some of his discourses, Samuel Gale, Esq., a young lawyer, took outlines, which he was afterwards induced to fill up as best he could. To these notes he often recurred, and at the distance of fifty years after their delivery, was still in the habit of reading them again and again, with ever fresh delight.

In a letter of June 16, 1805, Mr. Joseph Hardcastle, of London, writes: "We frequently think it possible that the concussions of Europe may lead to a crisis, in which it may be expedient for those who have large families to seek a quiet asylum. In this case, it is already decided, that the advantage of your friendship and your ministry will determine us to settle not far from New York.

The late Dr. John B. Beck, of New York, on his return from a foreign tour, in 1815, said that no American name attracted so much inquiry and admiration in England as that of Dr. Mason. Probably this was in part owing to the circumstance that he accompanied his uncle, Dr. Romeyn, who mingled more particularly with religious circles of society.

These statements accord with a note found in the Bibliotheca Sacra for May, 1849: "We regret that there is no memoir of a pulpit orator so distinguished as Dr. Mason. The impression which his eloquence made in England is still vivid in the minds of those who listened to him. The late eminent and excellent R. W. Hamilton, D.D., of Leeds, mentioned to the writer a number of incidents illustrating the power of his oratory. Another individual said, that on entering the church when Dr. M. was delivering his 'Messiah's Throne,' he was instantly so impressed, that he passed some distance and had taken his seat without being aware that his hat was still on his head, till it was indicated by those near."

Some of these things may add to the interest of his letters written home, in all the most unreserved frankness of domestic confidence. We insert a few of them somewhat abridged :—

TO MRS. MASON.

LONDON, June 11th, 1802.

I AM really grieved, my love, that no earlier opportunity of writing to you has occurred since the sailing of the Amsterdam packet. Three letters I had dispatched some weeks before, which, by a mistake of a friend in Glasgow, were *all* put on board the *William and Margaret.* My only recent intelligence is through the medium of Mr. Bethune, whose letters come down to the 13th of April. You will see, by the date of my letter, that I have executed the intention I hinted in my last, of visiting London. I have been here since the 9th ult., and do assure you am not suffered to *rust* for want of employment. On the evening of the 13th ult., I preached for the London Missionary Society, in Tottenham Court Chapel, to an audience of nearly 5,000 people. The scene altogether was most impressive. Above 300 ministers lined the front of the galleries, and the whole congregation seemed animated with one soul. Although I cannot approve the missionary proceedure without exception, nor am altogether free from fears of danger to their cause from circumstances *among themselves*, yet there is no reason to doubt that God has been, and much to hope that he will be, glorified by them. Letters have just been received from Canton announcing the safe arrival and kind reception of the last body of missionaries who were sent to Otaheite. I have not heard a syllable of the New York Missionary Society since I left home. The Directors of the Society here have taken up the subject of a mission to the Mosquito shore, and will probably, as soon as things will admit, act with us for carrying it into effect.

English Christianity is somewhat *unique.* I wish I had time to sit down and analyze it. I see in it much to admire and to love; but can observe *traits* which justify an apprehension that some of its tendencies, and those of strong operation, are not altogether auspicious. It has been my happiness to become acquainted with several of the best men, both in the Established Church, and out of it. A few days ago, I took my breakfast with good MR. NEWTON. He has one foot not more certainly in the grave, than he has the other on the threshold of heaven. This evening I go with Mr. Bethune to visit your favourite *Mr. Serle.* I have received great kindness from Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. H. Thornton, and others, on whose friendship I am entitled to reckon for support in pursuing one of the ends of my visit to Great Britain.

The Burgher Synod met in the end of April, entered unanimously and with the warmest cordiality into the views of our Synod, and backed my application with their judicial sanction. They formally recommended a compliance with the call of our churches to a number of their ministers, probationers, and students, by *name.* Who are to go will be known the end of this month. I then purpose to visit Ireland for a short time, and will hardly have leisure to see my friends in Scotland before the warning will be given to repair to the ship, that longed-for ship, which is to convey me home. O my Nancy, I am sick, sick, sick of this vagabond life! The sweet order and tranquility of my own house, and the steady endearments of my flock, will be more precious to me than ever. The end of July, or the beginning of August, will part me, I trust, from this island; but I should be worse than ungrateful if any distance of time or place were to obliterate the affectionate remembrance of the kindness which has encompassed me in every place I have visited.

Ever, ever your affectionate,

JOHN M. MASON.

TO MRS. MASON.

LONDON, July 1st, 1802.

Two weeks ago I wrote by the *Maryland*, informing my beloved Nancy of some of my peregrinations which conducted me at last to the metropolis. An adequate idea of this most enormous city can hardly be formed by one whose patience and whose eye have not been wearied in tracing its devious and extended streets. Of all the cities I know, it is perhaps the last in which I would choose to reside, chiefly on account of the huge expense of *time* which is necessarily created by traversing it.

I have been kept so constantly employed that I have scarcely heard a sermon since I came to London. A stranger is pestered with incessant applications to preach. Three times on the Lord's day have barely excused me. On week days I have been peremptory in declining. How welcome, how sweet, will be the peace of my dear family, and the sober, attentive order of my congregation! Long ago was I a Presbyterian from *principle;* and everything that I have seen since my arrival in Britain has served to strengthen my convictions. Never have I been so awfully impressed with the absolute necessity of the old-fashioned way of training up ministers in the Churches of Scotland and Holland, and of the importance of erecting, without delay, and supporting with vigour, seminaries of Theological instruction in America, as I am at this moment. It *must* be done or we are ruined.

This goes with our dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. Bethune. It is a mutual grief that we cannot sail together. My heart is with them, and so would be my person, if it were at all practicable. But it were foolish to hurry away at the expense of leaving business unfinished. My design and expectation are to follow in about five weeks. The dear children are constantly near my heart. O, that the gracious Providence which has hitherto watched over them, may keep them still! I commit them, with their much loved mother, to the guardian care of God my Saviour. May the light of his countenance continue to cheer you! Wherever we are, he is; and he will not leave us. He will restore me to the embraces of my precious family and affectionate friends. The month of September, I trust, will be the happy time.

The following, to his sister, Mrs. Brown, of Frankfort, Kentucky, touching several topics of both public and private concern, is too characteristic to be omitted. It has perhaps lost none of its interest by the years which have since elapsed:—

TO MRS. M. BROWN.

LONDON, July 1st, 1802.

YOUR letter, my sister, of December last, was long in coming to hand; but it imparted to me a pleasure comporting with the interest which my heart takes in whatever concerns you. Thanks be to that gracious God who has had mercy on you again in bestowing on you another son, and raising you up in health from the bed of anguish and peril. Strong, my sister, and many, are the obligations which bind us to gratitude. We are witnesses that "a good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children." Sprung from a father whose only riches were his "faith and good works," we have felt the fostering care of a liberal and benignant Providence. We are now reaping the partial answer of those prayers which, in social and secret devotion, drew out the hearts of our glorified parents. O, that a double portion of their spirit may fill up what is wanting of the full accomplishment of their desires! I count it infinitely greater nobility to have descended from one who was useful to men, and beloved of God, than to occupy a place in the proud lineage of earthly peerage. The blood of a Christian is a richer current in our veins than the blood of a lord. How happy, my sister, how inexpressibly happy, if in the extension of our privileges, we too may be found among the children of the light, and become, in our turn, of heaven's nobility! "If children, then *heirs*, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." Be this our first concern. Perish the pursuits of a "world which lieth in wickedness," and of which the "fashion passeth away," rather than that the great question should remain unsettled, "Whose am I, and whom do I serve?" May you and your dear husband, and your precious infants be mutual blessings under the sweet influences of the Spirit of Jesus! O give him no rest, till you have reason to believe that he has saved you with an everlasting salvation.

Your information about the religious commotions in Kentucky was seasonable and useful. It confirmed the suspicions I had previously entertained. I thought you would not object to the insertion of an extract from your letter in some of the periodical publications in this country. I have to entreat you to note down, as you have opportunity and leisure, such facts relating to this singular business as you know to be authentic, with their authorities. I devoutly rejoice that notwithstanding the irregularities which have taken place, religion has gained ground. May it go on and prosper. While I am sure the Kentucky method is not the method in which the Scriptures warrant us to expect that the Lord will revive his work, yet I would be cautious how I condemn in the lump. He may bring order out of confusion. If there is reality, the dross will perish, but the gold remain. Do not fail, however, to answer this question, which is all-important: Did the real advantages which you represent religious principle to have attained, *precede* or *follow* the excesses of the multitude? or have they appeared and kept pace *together?*

I do not love London. It is too large; it is overgrown. But, after all, London is the place of beneficence.

There is no prospect that peace will long continue, nor is it expected by any class of people. The cession of Louisiana to France, and her projected operations there, excite alarm. I have heard the best speakers in Parliament excepting Fox and Pitt. Our Congress will not lose much by a comparison. The character of the King is mistaken among us. Instead of a dull, brainless being, he is one of the shrewdest and best informed men in his dominions. Instead of being the ministers' dupe, he uses them as his tools; and when they are likely to acquire too much power, takes care to rid himself of their services. It was the King himself, and not the cry for peace, which broke up the Windham and Pitt administration. After all that I have seen and heard, America is my choice. I will return better satisfied with it than ever. But I do assure you that nothing can be more false and ridiculous than the declamations about the slavery and wretchedness of the people here. There is as much liberty as an honest man knows how to use.

Two days ago I had a peep at Majesty going to prorogue the Parliament. The King is a fine looking man; but I sighed, and felt proud when I recalled THE MAJESTY OF WASHINGTON.

Ever your affectionate brother,

JNO. M. MASON.

In seeking aid to found a Theological School in New York, he felt himself greatly encouraged by the friendships with which he met. He was cheered and supported by the patronage of many Christians among various denominations. Gentlemen of high standing aided the enterprise, both by their own contributions and by their influence. Among them it was most gratifying to find such men as Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. Thomton, Mr. Bonar, Mr. Hardcastle, and Dr. Hunter. If he could have remained longer in London, there is every reason to believe that the amount of contributions would have been far more considerable.

From London he returned to Edinburgh, where he remained long enough to arrange articles of correspondence with a Committee of the Associate Synod, to be afterwards submitted to their respective judicatories. These articles are dated Bristo, August 12, 1802, and signed by James Peddie, Committee Clerk, and J. M. Mason. After defining various modes of communion and intercourse, they conclude with a provision "that the Associate Synod shall from time to time, according to their ability, and as the circumstances of the Associate Reformed Church may require, do everything that is competent for them to furnish them with a supply of ministers and probationers, to preach the gospel under their inspection."

Immediately after this he went to Ireland, in compliance with an engagement previously made, and held a conference with a Committee appointed for the purpose by the Associate Synod of that island. Here, too, he was very cordially received, and was enabled to conclude an arrangement which was entirely satisfactory on both sides.

Urgent applications were made to him for the publication of all the sermons which he preached in London. But unfortunately, very few of them had been written. On this account, he found it necessary to decline. It seems, however, that unknown to himself, some London bookseller had employed reporters to take down his discourses as he delivered them, and after his departure put them to press as "First Ripe Fruits." They thus appeared in what he regarded a very mutilated form, and as doing him great injustice. The volume was also accompanied by what professed to be a biographical sketch; but it was full of mistakes. To counteract the effects of such an improper procedure, he felt compelled to promise the publication of a volume or two on his return to America. To this promise, (made at a time when he could not anticipate the many heavy burdens which would be imposed upon him), frequent reference is had in his subsequent correspondence; and it subjected him to importunities which must have been sometimes even painful.

His last letter before embarking at Greenock was directed to a friend in London, as follows:—

"August 31, 1802.

"Your affectionate letter has strengthened those ties by which my heart is bound to you and your dear family. If my ministrations have been at all blessed to any of you, let Him have the praise who alone can bless. It has often been my astonishment, and often, amidst deep dejection, my consolation and support, that my Divine Master has owned my pitiful services to the comfort and establishment of his dear people. How wonderful, my friend,—how overwhelmingly gracious, that unto me, who am less than the least, this favour is granted, that I should preach the unsearchable riches of Christ! Verily, he means to show, that not our worthiness, but sovereign love, is the source of his bounties; that not man, but the Lord alone, shall be exalted in the success of his Word; or he never would have permitted a sentence of it to issue from my uncircumcised lips. Pray, my dear friend, for his SANCTIFYING Spirit upon my person and my labours. Alas! the very best of them need the pardons of Messiah's blood. But if any man sin, we have,—yea, my friend, *we*, even *we*, have an advocate with the Father,—Jesus Christ, the righteous; Jesus Christ the propitiation for our sins! This relieves my heart, and soothes my conscience;—and in this faith I hope, through unfathomable riches of covenant mercy, to see my Lord and to be like him. In such blessedness, I anticipate the meeting with my friends of your house.

"I understand that some shorthand writers are preparing for publication from their crude notes a number of the sermons which I preached in London. I consider the attempt as a great injustice, and feel compelled, by a decent regard for my character, however reluctant, to authorize you to say, that I will, if spared, print a volume myself, as soon as possible. Any other, I will not acknowledge. The notes of your young friend, if put into long hand, will afford me much assistance, and make me her debtor.

"I scribble in great haste. The wind has just turned fair, and we are soon to sail."

CHAPTER XI.

1802.

PROCEEDINGS ON HIS RETURN.

Meets the Synod—Report of his Mission—Synodical letter to foreign Synods—Appeal to Associate Reformed Congregations—Certain Schismatics—Overloaded with duties at the Synod.

A FEW days after his return home, Mr. Mason met with the Synod convened, by adjournment, in New York, October 21, 1802; and gave them a full account of his agency abroad, in an official report to their Moderator. This report, after detailing the things already mentioned, continues as follows:—

"My instructions requiring me to endeavour to lay the foundation of a correspondence with some religious body or bodies, chiefly with a view to a future supply of ministers, it was a subject which particularly occupied my thoughts from the first moment of my landing in Britain. The best inquiries convinced me that it is not practicable for the Associate Reformed Church, consistently with her principles and comfort, to maintain any such correspondence with any denomination in Britain or Ireland, but those usually called Burgher Seceders. And, considering that all the ministerial aid which, in consequence of the late mission, we have received, or hope to receive, comes from the brethren of that connexion, this was at once the most obvious and only natural channel into which the correspondence could be directed. Conformably to this opinion, articles of correspondence have been settled with the aforementioned committees from the Associate Synods in Scotland and Ireland, and await the determination of these judicatories, and of the Synod of the Associate Reformed Church respectively.

"The procuring of funds toward the erection and support of a theological seminary, under the inspection of this Synod, made the principal object of my attention during the intervals of the transactions already detailed in this report. In prosecuting this part of my business, I at different times visited Glasgow, Stirling, Paisley, Greenock, and afterwards London and Manchester. An object so essential to the welfare of this Church, and so influential on the common Christianity, was countenanced by the vigorous patronage of many Christians among different denominations. Gentlemen of distinguished respectability, both in Scotland and England, interested themselves in its success. They distributed among their friends a circular letter. Their active good-will prevented, in most instances, the necessity of my personal applications. Had it been consistent with other duties to have remained longer in London, there is every reason to believe that a sum would have been raised equal to all the original exigencies of the proposed institution. Notwithstanding the unpropitious circumstance of an indisposition which suspended all my operations for nearly three months, and my premature departure from London, the following moneys, as stated at length elsewhere, have been collected: From Edinburgh £96 19*s.*, Glasgow £111 14*s.*, Greenock £35 5*s.* 6*d.*, Paisley £39 18*s.*, Stirling £16 16*s.*, London £639 16*s.* 8½*d.*, Manchester £10 10*s.*, Rotherham £20; making in the whole, £970 19*s.* 2½*d.*

"Of this money, the principal part has been expended in the purchase of books, most of which are to be deposited in the library of the seminary. The rest may be disposed of, *by sale*, as the Synod shall direct, but cannot be *given away* unless their price be replaced, as the whole of the pecuniary donations were made to the seminary *exclusively*.

"Several benefactions have also been made in books to the library.

"Although the liberality of Christians in Britain, towards the seminary contemplated by this Synod, could not but receive a check by the return of their agent, yet there is ground to think that it has by no means produced its whole effect. Gentlemen whose names are a sufficient pledge that no reasonable effort shall be wanting, nor any reasonable expectation disappointed, have engaged to solicit additional benefactions.

"The business of the mission having been brought to a close toward the end of August, I lost no time in preparing for my return, and on the 1st of September sailed from Greenock, in company with the Rev. Messrs. James Scrimgeour, Alexander Calderhead, Robert Forrest, Robert Easton, James Laurie, ministers, and Mr. Robert Hamilton Bishop, probationer, who having had a prosperous voyage by the will of God, are now present to tender their services to the churches."

The Synod, after hearing the report, united in special "thanksgiving to God for the safe return of their Commissioner, and the happy success with which his mission had been crowned." They also unanimously adopted the following resolutions:—

"1. That the very important mission entrusted to Mr. Mason has been executed with great wisdom, fidelity, and zeal.

"2. That the liberal, dignified reception given to our representative by the Associate Synod of Scotland, and a committee of the Associate Synod of Ireland, and that the serious attention to our interests which the former have manifested by sending a number of brethren to become our fellow-labourers, are entitled to our particular acknowledgments.

"3. That the principles of correspondence agreed upon by Mr. Mason, in behalf of the Associate Reformed Synod, and the respective committees of the aforesaid Synods, appear calculated to cherish Christian affection, to promote mutual confidence and edification, and ought to be adopted by this Synod."

At the same meeting, the Synod adopted a "judicial letter," prepared by Messrs. John M. Mason and Alexander Proudfit, as a committee appointed for the purpose, and addressed to the Associate Synods of Scotland and Ireland respectively. The principal part of this letter is as follows:—

"Reverend and Dear Brethren:

"We embrace this early opportunity of expressing our obligations for that cordial and liberal reception, given by you to the member lately delegated to represent that church over which the Holy Ghost hath made us overseers. It is to us a source of peculiar rejoicing to learn that confidence which you place in us, expressed by your recognition of our Synod as a sister church, corresponding with you in doctrine, discipline, government and worship. All this confidence, we trust, is reciprocated, on our part, to your venerable body. While, by this instrument, we formally acknowledge you as brethren, our hearts are unfeignedly united to you by the most intimate, and endearing, and inviolable of all bonds—the bond of Christian affection. We embrace and esteem you as workers together with ourselves in promoting the glory of our common Redeemer, and the edification of His mystical body.

"Our gratitude is not inconsiderably heightened by that seasonable and liberal supply of the ministry of reconciliation which you have recently afforded our churches. It is a mark of Christian zeal, equally dignified and disinterested, when local considerations are unregarded, when private and personal conveniences are sacrificed, in the prospect of promoting the general interests of religion. It participates of that apostolic liberality which, regardless of the particular nation in which, or the particular instrument by whom, rejoiced in the consideration that the Saviour was preached, and precious souls edified and saved.

"Beloved brethren, through the good providence of God we are continuing to go on and prosper. Our Ebenezer is most reasonably set up, proclaiming to the riches of his grace and condescension, 'Hitherto hath Jehovah helped.' With a rapidity almost unexampled, he hath extended the boundaries of our Synod; he is increasing between our people at large and the chief judicatory to which they are subordinate, and between the different pastors and the congregations immediately under their charge, that confidence which, under God, forms the chief security of mutual comfort and edification.

"Where ordinances are statedly dispensed among us, Jehovah the Sanctifier is not leaving himself without a witness; sinners, we humbly hope, are occasionally made subjects of His saving operations, and heirs of salvation more sensibly sealed unto the day of redemption.

"Numerous and pressing applications for the word of life are still presented to us from the frontier settlements of our country —from places where the gospel is scarcely known, and where the message of reconciliation through the cross has been rarely proclaimed. This circumstance still prepares us to receive with open arms, and welcome with grateful hearts, the messenger of salvation, as you may be able to furnish him."

At the same meeting, an address to the people of the Associate Reformed Church, prepared by a committee of which Mr. Mason was chairman, was adopted. It here follows:—

"The Ministers and Elders in Synod assembled, considering that the erection of a seminary for the appropriate education of youth who design the holy ministry is essential to the prosperity of their churches, as there is no other means from which they can hope for a sufficient and permanent succession of ministers; being deeply impressed with a grateful sense of the obligations imposed on them by the countenance which their proposed seminary has received, in liberal contributions of Christians in Great Britain; and being fully convinced that their plan can easily be accomplished, to the church's great benefit, by the regular and reasonable aid of their people; but that without such aid it must perish; and that all the evils which the Synod foresee from such an event must be realized; do hereby most earnestly and affectionately entreat the support of all their congregations, settled and vacant, agreeably to the terms of their act concerning a Synodical fund. They feel confident that their people need only understand the object for which they solicit pecuniary assistance, to be both prompt and exemplary in affording it. They cannot suppose that any congregation under their inspection will expose itself to the reproach of having less concern about the spiritual prosperity of its own brethren, than has been manifested by Christians in a foreign land. They judge themselves bound by every tie of thankfulness and decorum to omit no exertion for carrying into effect the intentions of those disinterested benefactors. In this they indulge the pleasing thought that they speak the very heart of their beloved people. They acknowledge, with much satisfaction, and as an omen of general good, the alacrity which has been discovered in seconding their views in proportion to the examination which they have undergone, and especially the increase of contribution to the public fund within these two years. They are confident that their congregations will never suffer to be attached to their character the blot of negligence towards a design which has commanded the approbation and zeal of Christians abroad, much less the blot of permitting all their munificence to be wasted for want of coöperation. They, once for all, assure their people, that nothing more is necessary to meet the various claims for public expenditure, particularly to establish in the completest manner a most extensively useful seminary for training up able ministers of the Word, than a strict attention to the recommendation of the fore-mentioned act; and they anticipate the pleasure of finding from the annual returns of contributions, that they have not erred in believing that their people think with them."*

Still more distinctive traces of Mr. Mason's hand may be seen in the measures adopted by the Synod in relation to certain disaffected and schismatic members, in remote and less informed congregations. From the time of the Union, there always had been a few in almost every Scotch settlement who were rigidly tenacious of all their inherited peculiarities, and felt excessively afraid of innovation. Every change, however unimportant or non-essential, they regarded, or affected to regard, as a departure from the "good old way," and as verging towards latitudinarianism—a thing which Caledonians almost instinctively abhor. They could not bear the thought of altering in one jot or tittle either the standards or customs of their native church. Sometimes, doubtless, there were honest though uninformed scruples concerned in the matter; but at other times nothing better than the workings of prejudice. Trouble from such sources had been experienced by the second Presbytery of Carolina and Georgia. Two of their ministers (one of whom had but a little while before been restored from a suspension) "came forward and spoke at large about their zeal for the church, the errors of Synod, the tenderness of their consciences, and concluded by informing the Presbytery that they had sent their declinature to Synod with their reasons in full, and unless the Presbytery would follow their example, they would neither touch, taste, or handle with them. This being refused by the Presbytery, they withdrew; and the Presbytery apprehend that they will injure the interests of the church all they can, especially in vacancies." (Minutes of the Presbytery.) This case was referred to a committee, of which Mr. M. was chairman. Part of their report, as illustrating at once his tender regard for conscientious scruples, and his unsparing severity against the captious and troublesome, is here inserted:—

---

* The act alluded to, requests from every adult member and hearer, not disabled by poverty in every congregation, settled and vacant, a yearly contribution of half a dollar to be regularly transmitted, through the Presbyteries, to the Synod.

"The committee have attentively considered the aforesaid papers, and are of opinion that they contain little, if anything, to give just cause of uneasiness to any well-disposed person. But as the members and congregations of that Presbytery appear to be involved in difficulty, they recommend that the Synod send a letter of explanation and advice suited to their present circumstances."

The most important portion of the letter prepared by the committee, and adopted by the Synod, follows:—

"The Synod, with all that affection and regard which ought to pervade their councils relative to the churches under their care, have perused your petition and letter. It grieves them that your peace should be marred, and the edification of the Church impeded by litigations, of which some are frivolous, and all pernicious. The Synod never expected, it were vain to expect, that the spirit of captiousness will be entirely subdued, or the tongue of slander silenced. No conduct can be so shaped, nor any principle so expressed, as to please those who seek occasion for censure. The Synod reminded you in their pastoral letter of 1801, that they cannot descend from the respect which they owe to themselves, to refute every cavil and calumny against their procedure. They are resolved, generally, to answer with silence the insinuations and assertions of unreasonable men. They desire all their subordinate judicatories to pursue the same plan. Go on in the path of your duty with a firm and equal step, and leave to their own insignificance the tales of meddling censoriousness, which 'come up in a night, and perish in a night.' While, therefore, the Synod would not have noticed, on their own account, the allegations which, from different quarters, are brought against them; nevertheless, out of respect to your wishes, and sympathy with your particular situation, they inform you, that the modification of phraseology in some clauses of the Confession concerning the civil magistrate, were not intended to conform the Constitution of the Associate Reformed Church to the constitution of any other body, civil or religious. The Synod never made an agreement or disagreement with any existing ecclesiastical or political institution an object of their solicitude. But they did not wish to retain expressions which might be interpreted as recognizing in the civil magistrate a right to interfere with the internal economy of the Christian Church, or the principle of persecution for conscience sake.

" The omission in our Constitution, of the National Covenant of Scotland, and the Solemn League and Covenant, cannot wound the most tender conscience if rightly informed. It is not possible, consistently with truth, to make these covenants, as they stand, a part of the Church's testimony in America ; and, therefore, the insertion of them among her terms of communion, instead of promoting the edification of her members, would only serve as a snare for their consciences. To be at all applicable to the circumstances of this church, they must undergo a variety of alterations. But the moment any alteration is introduced into an instrument of solemn compact, it ceases to be the same instrument. To *modify* the covenants, therefore, is to *destroy* them ; they instantly cease to be the same covenants; and the persons who take them thus modified, instead of *renewing* them, do, in fact enter into a *new* compact, and, by that very act, resort to the original principle of covenanting.

" On the principle of explicit public covenanting, the Synod have repeatedly declared their views, in terms which cannot be easily misunderstood by the most simple and illiterate.* If, after all their endeavours to free their own sentiments from misconstruction, and remove honest scruples from the minds of their people, they cannot escape the most injurious and unfounded aspersions, they can only commit their cause to Divine Providence. If any man will still be ignorant, let him be ignorant. They have never departed from a principle which they have formerly asserted, that public covenanting is an exercise suited to very singular emergencies of the church; and whenever, in the judgment of the Synod, such emergencies shall occur, they trust they shall not be found unmindful of their duty.

---

* See the 22d chapter of the Overture for illustrating and defending the doctrines of the Westminster Confession of Faith, published in 1788 ; and an Act concerning the religious connexions of the Synod, passed and published in 1790.

"The embarrassments which you state to have arisen from different views among the ministers and people of the two Presbyteries of the Carolinas and Georgia, concerning the days of fasting and thanksgiving usually connected with the dispensation of the Lord's Supper, are very afflicting to the Synod. But with one part of your representation, viz.: that you 'apprehend these Presbyteries will not sit in a Synod until some one gives up their practice in this matter,' the Synod are not merely afflicted—they are much displeased; and they feel themselves constrained, by the fullest convictions of duty, to administer the word of rebuke as well as of exhortation. The question which agitates you is not one which touches the vitals of a pure communion. It is not one of greater moment than some of those which divided the apostolic church, and which the Holy Ghost commanded to be a subject of forbearance. Men who are equally upright in their intentions, equally tender of the Redeemer's glory, equally firm in their adherence to his cross, equally faithful in their several vocations, may be, have been, are now, arrayed on opposite sides of this controversy. It is, therefore, no ground of separation. Your divisions, brethren, especially when carried to such a height, are more hurtful than the views of either side. To refuse judicial and affectionate intercourse on account of them, would be schismatical and offensive in the highest degree. The Synod hope and believe, that none of their subordinate judicatories will set an example of that hasty and causeless rupture of religious fellowship which is alike repugnant to the word of God, and ruinous to the prosperity of His Church. If your difference on this subject shall end in separation, or if you shall refuse to sit together as brethren, there will be too good reason to fear that it resulted, not from love to the body of Christ—not from an endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace—not from meek and brotherly proceedure—but from the indulgence of unholy tempers. You have other work for your zeal than thus contending with each other. The common foe stands by and waits for your halting, that he may devour both. Unfriendly eyes are open; unfriendly tongues will be busy. The Synod therefore counsel you, brethren—yea, charge you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, *that there be no divisions among you.* They are bound to think that you are alike desirous of building up the temple of God. Bear then one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. Call into operation the apostolic principle:—*He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it* The whole advice and injunction of the Synod are summed up in this one word FORBEAR! As you would not weaken the hands of your brethren—as you would not grieve their hearts —as you would not bring leanness into your own souls, and a frown upon your ministrations—as you would not rend the body of Christ, nor burst the bands of his love—as you hope to give in your accounts with joy—FORBEAR! You are required to meet shortly in Synod. You will find employment for promoting the church's weal. Let us hear of your kind and harmonious coöperation. Refresh our bowels. *Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you. Amen.*"

At this meeting Mr. Mason was also made chairman of several other important committees: One "to take charge of books purchased for the library of the Theological Seminary, to arrange them in proper order with respect to the classification of their subjects, and cause a correct catalogue of them to be made." Another "to prepare the draught of a plan for the Seminary proposed to be erected by the Associate Reformed Church, and to report to the General Synod, at their meeting to be held in May, 1804." A third "to report, at the same time, on the most proper means of promoting the study of biblical literature among our ministers, and a habit of accuracy in judicial business." A fourth, to prepare a draught of "an application to be made to the Congress of the United States, for a remission of the duties charged upon the books imported for the benefit of the Seminary." A fifth, to "select and arrange for publication such parts of the minutes of the proceedings of this Synod as they shall judge proper; to superintend the printing of such extracts; to cause them to be distributed, with all convenient speed, among the different Presbyteries; and to cause two copies of them to be transcribed for transmission to the Associate Synods of Scotland and Ireland."

To all these, other evidences might be added, of the very conspicuous part which Mr. Mason was, by general consent, called to act in the judicatories of his denomination. Though but just returned, from a year's absence, to his family and his flock—though yet in the midst of friendly congratulations, and the resumption of accumulated domestic and pastoral duties—it seems that he was burdened with the chief weight of the many special transactions which occupied that meeting. All who are acquainted with the nature and perplexity of such matters, can scarcely fail of wondering at the amount of labours which must have passed through his hands. It was certainly with astonishing ardour that he always entered into the proceedings of ecclesiastical courts, and applied himself to those great interests of religion which they were intended to subserve. His known promptness and sagacity—his extraordinary industry and efficiency—could not fail of placing him in the first station of every important movement. He was seldom absent from any meeting, and was always attentive to every part of the business transacted. He entered into every discussion of importance with great earnestness, and pushed forward every public measure with great vigour. He felt expanded desires and strong confidence that church judicatories might do much in promoting the great cause for which they were instituted. His ardent mind, his ready powers, his energy and courage, fitted him remarkably for acting a leading part in every Christian enterprise. The consequence was, that he was seldom or never left without a disproportionate share of the most difficult and responsible duties. It seldom happened that his shoulders were not loaded with a heavier burden than those of any other member. Nor did he ever shrink from any task laid upon him, and satisfaction was generally given by the manner in which he performed it. A minister who was present on the occasion referred to, the Rev. Ebenezer Dickey, under date of Dec. 29, 1802, speaks of "the over share of business devolved upon you from the Synod and its members, with the multitude of things which must have been waiting for your attention on your return;" and adds, "Indeed I felt sorry that you should be charged with so many things at a time so inconvenient."

CHAPTER XII.

1803—1804.

FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE.

Letter from Joseph Hardcastle, Esq.—Letter to the London Missionary Society—Letter from Rev. George Burder—Letter from Rev. W. Carey—Letter to Joseph Hardcastle, Esq.—Letter from Robert Bowyer, Esq.—Letter to Robert Bowyer, Esq.—Letter to Miss S. C. Covell—Letter to A. Simpson, Esq.—Letter to Mrs. Dr. Hunter—Letter to R. Spear, Esq.—Letter to Rev. William Kidston—Letter to Rev. Dr. John Dick—Letter from Mr. Hardcastle—Missions—National Commotions—British and Foreign Bible Society—Letter to Mr. E. Mason, Edinburgh.

ADDITIONAL particulars on subjects touched before, together with other topics of moment, will be found in the subjoined letters. If fewer facts are given, they are no less important; and much more will be seen of those peculiar turns of thought, curren tsof feeling, and style of writing, which develope character.

The following private letter from Mr. Hardcastle, accompanying documents from the London Missionary Society, contains some further evidence of the impressions which Mr. Mason had left in England; also of the thoughts and plans which British Christians entertained respecting France. Thus early appeared the germ of schemes which have more recently been matured into the form of associations for evangelizing the infidel and papal portions of Europe. Moreover this letter brought Mr. Mason the first direct intelligence concerning the decease of a very distinguished and dear friend in London:—

TO THE REV. J. M. MASON.

REV. AND DEAR SIR: I cannot permit our public letter to pass through your hands, without accompanying it with a testimony of my personal respect and affection. Your social intercourse and your public ministry have left an impression on many hearts, which will be long retained. I feel persuaded also, that the attachments which you formed here with many of the excellent of the earth, will frequently be revived in your mind, and awaken your friendly sympathies. With many of these, no personal intercourse will be renewed, till, in the world of spirits, the relations of time and of grace are recognized and resumed for eternity; and in the interval you will occasionally be hearing of the removal of one and another of your Christian friends here.

It fills my heart with the most tender sensibility, to call up the springs of sorrow in yours, by relating the departure of one of the dearest associates you conversed with in England. Your excellent and affectionate brother in Christ, Dr. Hunter, has taken his station among the immortals.

The event occurred at Bristol, where he had passed a few weeks by the recommendation of his friends, but the particular circumstances have not reached me. A day or two previous to my departure for France, I had the pleasure of seeing him, apparently in firm health, and in his usual spirits. A few of your friends met him at our counting house, to consider what further measures ought to be adopted with a view to promote your object of the Seminary. An outline of a representation of the case to the religious public was prepared, in order to its insertion in the Evangelical Magazine, after it should have received some revision, which our late worthy friend undertook to give it. A short time after, while administering the Lord's Supper, he was seized with the disorder which in a few weeks terminated his life.

By the enclosed report you will perceive the result of our mission to France. The friends who accompanied me were the Rev. Messrs. Bogue, Wilks and Waugh. Openings for the gospel appear to us remarkably encouraging. *Evangelical ministers* are much wanted, the peculiar and prominent doctrines of revelation being, I fear, generally abandoned, even by Protestants. But were they presented with clearness and force, we have reason to believe the churches would be crowded, even with Catholics. Should there be any French Protestant ministers in America disposed to return to their native country, they need be at no loss to settle in stations of great scope for usefulness, and would be well supported, provided they were of the above description.

Mrs. H. and my daughter desire to unite their affectionate respects with mine, to yourself and family. I hope shortly to hear of your safety and welfare, and it will at all times afford me particular satisfaction to receive letters from you. I hope for the continuance of encouraging accounts from your side, and have the pleasure to say, that the gospel appears to be making gradual progress in this country. In the sincere affection which its principles inspire, I remain, dear Sir, your faithful friend,

JOSEPH HARDCASTLE.

To the public letter, accompanying the above, the following is an answer. It shows what kind of intercourse was maintained between distant societies, and what kind of intelligence interested Christians of that day:—

NEW YORK, July 20, 1803.

To the Directors of the London Missionary Society, the Directors of the New York Missionary Society wish grace, mercy and peace, through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Your letter, brethren, of the 3d Nov., 1802, with the accompanying publications, afforded us much of that pleasure which can spring only from the reality of Christian fellowship. We rejoice in your joy on account of all the good things which God our Saviour blesses your eyes to see, and your hearts to experience. We learn with gratitude that your apostolic missionary, Dr. Vander Kemp, is still preserved, and still labours with his indefatigable zeal among the poor Hottentots. A zeal so fervid, a spirit so intrepid and patient, a self-denial so exemplary, an attachment to the cross so devoted, as characterize this faithful and beloved man, cannot surely have been bestowed in vain. We indulge the hope that he is now acting a distinguished part in that great plan which the Lord is executing by the instrumentality of men whose breath is in their nostrils; and in the progress of which he may "say to the North, give up; and to the South, keep not back. Bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth."

We likewise join with you in thanksgiving for the prospects which have opened to the Gospel in France and Italy. The report of your committee on that subject was read at one of our monthly meetings for prayer, and produced a very strong sensation. How wonderful in counsel, and how excellent in working is our God! None but his own wisdom and his own arm could render those judgments, by which he consumes the man of sin, subservient to the spread of truth and purity. May he hasten in his time the downfall of that son of perdition; and the glory which he hath promised shall arise upon the world! May your efforts, brethren, be honoured with success in pouring the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ upon the thick darkness of Papal countries, and be hereafter a topic of praise among the nations, which his dominion shall reach from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth!

We wish it were in our power to increase your joy, by declaring what great things God hath wrought among *our* heathen for his namesake. Our mission to the North Western Indians does indeed flourish: that is, the missionary is kindly treated and respectfully heard by them. There is also reason to believe that the word of the kingdom is not altogether as water spilled on the ground. There is encouragement from the circumstance that our success thus far has been through much opposition from the adversary. We desire not to despise the day of small things, but to pray and wait with all perseverance, till the Lord, according to his promise, rains down righteousness upon us.

Were every enterprise of our own concerting to be successful, we would be too prone to reflect with complacency upon our own wisdom and strength. Therefore, although we feel pained to inform you that our mission to the Chickasaw Indians seems ready to perish, we would derive from the disappointment a lesson of dependence and submission. We must subscribe the Scriptural doctrine in its public as well as private application, that it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.

The report, annexed to the sermon herewith transmitted, will furnish more particulars concerning both our missions and our means.

If we hear of any persons qualified to be missionaries in France, we shall not fail to advise you—although we fear that the renewal of hostilities will have an unhappy effect upon your designs toward that country. It is doubtless to be deplored that the sword is again unsheathed, and that blood must again flow. How necessary, dear brethren, and precious is the support of the Gospel in evil days! How high the privilege to possess our souls in patience, when confusion and dismay assail the world! Blessed be the Lord, we receive a kingdom which cannot be moved! We pray for you in these times of trouble. We pray for our brethren in the common salvation, whose lot may be cast amidst scenes of peril and violence. May he who is the hope of Israel and the Saviour thereof, preserve us all to his heavenly kingdom! We wish you much of his presence and Spirit; and entreat your intercession for us, that jointly and individually we may be faithful unto death, and afterwards may inherit the crown of life.

By order of the Directors.

JOHN M. MASON, Secretary.

TO THE REV. J. M. MASON, SECRETARY, &c.

LONDON, July 22, 1803.

DEAR SIR: I beg leave to advise you, that, according to a vote of the Missionary Society, Mr. Hardcastle dispatched for you on the 20th inst., by the *Martha*, Captain Waddell, a parcel containing an Address to the Missionary Society of New York, and a printed report of our proceedings during the past year, both which, I hope, will afford to your missionary friends encouragement to proceed in the good work.

We have lately received information from the East Indies that the Rev. Mr. Gerike (who succeeds Mr. Swartz) has been most wonderfully successful. Whole villages invited him to preach the Gospel among them, renounced idolatry, burnt their idols publicly, and embraced the Christian doctrine. He and his associates had baptized at least 2,700 persons. Glory be to God! The whole letter will appear in the Evangelical Magazine for August.

It pleased God about two months ago, to deprive our society of one of its most valuable friends and officers, the Rev. Mr.

Eyre. This is a great loss; but we trust the Lord will enable us who remain to be as active as possible, to supply his lack of service.

Great energies are now employed by our government in consequence of the threatened invasion. A general armament is intended, and the men are to exercise on the Lord's day. This is a measure so pregnant with danger to the religion and morals of the people, that pious men are greatly alarmed, and I hope have prevailed to obtain an exemption for tender consciences.

I shall think myself honoured, Sir, by frequent communications from you. We long to hear from you. Let us know particularly how religion and your Missionary Society prosper.

When may we hope for your volume of sermons? It would be certain of a most extensive circulation.

Your affectionate brother in the Lord,

GEO. BURDER, Secretary L. M. S.

Through a member of his church, Mr. Mason, Secretary of the New York Missionary Society, commenced a correspondence with that early and distinguished Missionary who did so much for diffusing the light of Revelation among the Hindoos —the Rev. William Carey. It will be recollected, that this was the mission against which *The Edinburgh Review*, in an early number, directed its keenest satire, treating as folly every attempt to Christianize a people without first civilizing them. How pleasing, that in America, as well as in Britain, there were men of an opposite spirit, and thus of an opposite view. The insertion of Dr. Carey s letter here, will doubless be regarded either with favour or disfavour according to the feelings which preponderate in the mind of the reader. In justice to the *Review*, however, we ought to add, that it has since become as laudatory of evangelical missions, as it was once denunciatory.

TO THE REV. J. M. MASON.

CALCUTTA, November 9, 1803.

VERY DEAR SIR: Yours, with several pamphlets, by Mr. Smith, I have received, and feel myself under obligation to you for such kind attentions to us.

I am sorry you make any apology about writing to me. We are brethren, and I trust each of us, to the best of our present knowledge, is following our Lord. Differences of judgment have always existed in the church since it became a body of any magnitude, and probably will continue to exist. Let us, however, be attentive to the main thing, and principally, nay wholly, follow the glory of God as our object; and I doubt not but other differences will in a great measure subside and disappear.

The Lord has been very gracious to us in several respects; though, when we compare the few who have been brought to the knowledge of the truth, with the amazing multitudes who are still wallowing in the grossest vice and the most senseless superstition, we sometimes feel a momentary discouragement, and say, "We have wrought no deliverance in the Earth; neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen." Our discouragements seldom last long, and indeed ought not; for that God, who has set his hand to the work of conversion here, is not only able to carry it on, but is infinitely interested in its progress.

We have baptized twenty-six natives, three of whom are Brahmans, and five Mussulmans. The remainder are of various castes of the Hindoos. Two of them have departed this life, and held out honourably to the last. Among the others are some who may in time be profitable for the ministry, and most of them give us much pleasure by their conduct.

The first edition of the New Testament has been nearly distributed, and has been read by very many. A second edition is now in the press, and will be published as soon as possible. The Old Testament is going on as fast as circumstances will permit. I hope soon to see the whole published.

The great work which has lately been carried on in America, is unspeakably encouraging. I hope that it still goes on, and will go on, till that great continent be brought to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. I have not lately heard anything new about missionary affairs in America. I hope that good work is pursued with increasing vigour. Success may be delayed, but is certain in the end.

How long will it be ere that disgrace of human nature, the Slave Trade, is banished from America? I can scarcely summon up charity enough to believe that any person who buys and sells human beings can be a Christian.

I am affectionately yours,
WILLIAM CAREY.

TO JOSEPH HARDCASTLE, Esq.

New York, August 1, 1803.

My Very Dear Friend: I can scarcely believe that this day completes a twelvemonth since I had the happiness of seeing you, and that to-morrow morning will be the anniversary of that painful hour when I took my leave of the dear family at Hatcham House, never perhaps to meet till our pilgrimage be over. At the same time I am not without a pang of a different and less honourable nature, and in respect to which you are perhaps inclined to be sceptical when you cast your eye upon the date of my letter, and remember what it ought to have been. Ah! my dear Sir, if you knew my compunction, you would not for one moment withhold your forgiveness. Place my misdemeanour to the account of business, of indolence, of a singular facility of procrastination, which has always been my evil genius—of anything but that of which your heart is incapable of feeling—insensibility or ingratitude. Grievous as are our trials in this life, our condition would be much more forlorn than it is, were we denied the recollection of what is past. Departed joys have a sweet remembrance, when they have grown out of the principles and been sanctified by the grace of the gospel. Among the many pleasurable reflections which lighten our toil in this wearisome world, those arising from former intercourse of Christians are not the least. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one hope, one heart under the influence of that hope, are better enjoyments than spring from the increase of corn and wine; enjoyments, which leave no sting in the conscience; which continually remind us that the children of the kingdom are treading a common path; which furnish precious pledges of the fellowship on high; which shall neither be mingled with bitterness, nor interrupted by change. I would not for the gold of Potosi lose that precious hope and belief, that a review of the way in which the Lord our God shall have led us by the hand will form one of the employments of the blessed. We shall talk over the transactions of

London, and the walks of Hatcham gardens, with another language and other views than are permitted to our present faculties. "We who are in this tabernacle, do groan." Oh, for that consummation, when we shall get the last victory over death; shall see Jesus as he is; shall be like him; and shall hear from his own lips the explanation of both his truth and his dispensations! I frankly confess to you, my dear friend, that I am often near to fainting, and disposed to say, in a spirit too little resigned, "It is better for me to die, than to live." One of my greatest luxuries, is even an earthly bosom into which I can pour out a part of the anguish which is created by the rebellions of the "old man." Everlasting thanks to our Lord Jesus, that he is able to "succour those who are tempted, seeing that he also was tempted." This is a wonderful word, which ought to stop our mouths, or open them in adoration—"Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." That school is of high import and salutary lesson, of which "the Word made flesh" was not exempted from the discipline! Blessed be the Lord, for the promise of release! We have only to follow those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. They have the advantage of us; but we can do one thing for our Redeemer which they cannot—glorify him by suffering, and conquer by believing. But it is only a little while, and then —— oh, what shall be then?

The friends who undertook to prosecute the interests of our Seminary, have the gratitude of our churches. Of my own they need no assurance. Patience in waiting for fruits, and firmness in resisting difficulty, added to faith and supplication, will work wonders. I have no fear for ultimate success. Rome was not built in a day. We cannot conjure up seminaries at our pleasure. We must not "despise the day of small things," and we beg that our Christian benefactors in Britain will not expect more in a given time than the nature of things renders practicable. A committee, of whom I am one, are directed to have a plan of instruction digested by the meeting of the Synod in May next. This alone will require much thought and mature consideration to do it well. Every day cools me more and more to mushroom measures, which are to have extensive and lasting effects. "Make haste slowy," is a maxim which the abortive fits of green zeal in myself and others, have taught me in some measure to understand. I have lived but a short time, and very short indeed, dating from the time when frisky boyhood swells into sanguine youth. It is not long since I imagined the reformation of the world, the diffusion of knowledge, the propagation of sound literature, &c. &c., were easy matters. But I have already tried long enough to dismiss these visions, and to learn that no effectual good is to be obtained but by diligence and fortitude in the use of proper means; and that a man in a community acting upon system, never losing sight of the end, always returning to the charge after every repulse, and persevering in the course, is almost infallibly sure of accomplishing his object, and that with much less delay than afterwards appears credible. On this principle, I flatter myself that our friends in Britain may see an harvest spring up from the seed they have contributed to sow, and it will surely be no damper to us if they incline "in the morning to sow their seed, and in the evening not to hold their hand."

Thus far had I written, when business, which called me from home, interrupted my conversation with my friend; and I had but only returned one day when the formidable reappearance of that scourge, from which our city has been mercifully exempted for three years, the yellow fever, made it necessary to seek an asylum for my family. An alarm which had been given a fortnight before was rapidly subsiding, and the danger was thought nearly over on Sabbath, 14th of August. But the next morning we were surprised with such a sudden and serious inroad of the destroyer as united medical men in advice to leave the city. The advice produced an electric effect. Whole districts are completely deserted. So general an evacuation was never before known. It is the opinion of the best informed, that without this measure, the calamity would have been frightful beyond example. Nothing but black frost will kill the venom floating in the air. This cannot be expected before November; so that all the business and arrangements of our commercial metropolis will be suspended for nearly three months. You will sympathize with us. I returned to this place (Newark), a delightful village, some nine miles west of New York, on the 16th ult. My family, including six children, one of whom is a present from the Lord since I came from England, is in perfect health. My congregation has hitherto lost only a single member by the epidemic. Of the multitudes who are unable to retire, the deaths have not averaged more than six a day. You may think it strange, but it is true, that while death holds his reign over a great portion of the eastern margin of the city, so that none venture there but with imminent danger, other parts of it are untouched. We cannot but lament and feel humbled, that the dispersion of our citizens has broken up our worshipping assemblies, and shut our sanctuaries. This, though perhaps least regarded by many, is not the lightest part of the judgment. Alas, we are a sinful people! laden with iniquity; the judgments of the Lord are right. Oh, that when his voice crieth unto the city, we may have wisdom to see his name; to hear the rod, and who hath appointed it! I go every Lord's day to the island, and preach to such of my flock (and they are not a few) as can be collected at a point two miles distant from the city.

I had hoped to enclose an official communication from our Board of Directors to yours; but it cannot be effected till we be permitted to return. Our missionary, Mr. Holmes, to a large portion of piety and zeal, adds the benefit of experience, and much of that quality more rare and valuable in dealing with Indians than any other quality merely intellectual—strong natural sense. We have high hopes, that among the tribes to which he is sent, God our Saviour will make to himself a glorious name.

Assure Mrs. and Miss H. that I retain an affectionate remembrance of them and their society. To the younger members of your family, one by one, I would say with deep solemnity, "Know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind. If thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever." I have only to wish for you and yours righteousness from the God of your salvation. Pray that in your best enjoyments here, and in your final triumph through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, you may be joined, dear Sir, by

Your affectionate friend and humble servant,

J. M. MASON.

Other memorials of the times follow :—

TO THE REV. J. M. MASON.

LONDON.

MY TRULY DEAR AND VALUABLE FRIEND: The affectionate and charming letter which you was so kind to write me the day before you left our shores, demands my best acknowledgments. It is deposited with the choicest of my earthly treasures. May its sentiments be inscribed upon my heart! The reading of it has been, and frequently is to me a source of so much pleasure that it has helped to increase the pain and disappointment I have felt at your long silence, which I should hardly be able to reconcile did I not know how much your time must be engaged upon objects so much more deserving your attention. You will I fear bear a very decided testimony against me, when you recollect that I have not till this time sent out such memoranda as I could procure of those never-to-be-forgotten sermons which you preached in this country. But after having promises from many persons to supply me, they have all disappointed me except the dear young female friend at Walworth. She has done her best for you, and I now send you all I can get. What she has done has been out of pure affection. She would I believe be almost glad to be your sculling maid all the week, so that she might sit under your ministry on the Sabbath. I have no doubt that many thousands of the sermons will be sold. Constant inquiries are made, but my dear friend you must send the copy here to be printed in this country. No other plan will do. I will cheerfully get them printed; and you must send the copy before they are printed in America. Otherwise the persons here who have been publishing your two sermons, and the oration on General Washington's Death, will be getting everything they can of yours from America, and reprinting it. You have no doubt seen "*First Ripe Fruits,*" published by Ogle. Lest you should not, I send you one.

Will you be kind enough, my dear friend, to send me over by the first opportunity, one of each of *everything* of yours which has been printed.

Let me entreat you, my dear friend, to send us over your sermons directly, that we may begin printing without loss of time. We will take care to get the head engraved to accompany them. Should any thing unforeseen (which we hope and trust will not be the case) prevent your sermons being published, we must request the favour of you to return us these memoranda of dear Miss Covell, as they are valuable treasures to us. I used to read these sketches every Sabbath. We heard no others while in Paris, except two or three Sabbaths. Dear Waugh and Wilks, and Mr. Hardcastle and Bogue, were there. We were all in the same house together.

Mrs. Bowyer and Miss Andras unite with me in every possible expression of affectionate regard.

I am ever yours most affectionately,

R. BOWYER.

P. S.—Bella, Horrida Bella!!!

TO R. BOWYER, Esq.

NEWARK, NEW JERSEY, Sept. 6, 1803.

MY DEAR FRIEND: Your kind letter, without date, was handed to me by Mr. Bignell on the 28th ult. He arrived at a most unfortunate season, the city being almost evacuated, and its business broken up, through the prevalence of the yellow fever. But little can be done till the business of the city resume its course and this will not take place sooner than eight or ten weeks. I am afraid that our frequent scourgings produce only the baneful fruit of hardening us. In second causes we lose sight of the hand which directs them. We have not returned unto God; and as we walk contrary to Him, it is just that he should walk contrary to us. Sanctified judgment is a blessing which we do not seem to have enjoyed hitherto. It is well for us that there are yet some, *who sigh and cry for all the abominations which are done in the land. Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a very small remnant, we had been as Sodom, we had been made like unto Gomorrah.*

I am sorry that my promised volume suffers so much delay. You greedy folks about London have occasioned it. You would allow me neither leisure to breathe on the Sabbath, nor leisure to write in the week. I did not intend to have preached but a few times; and four discourses having exhausted my manuscripts, the rest were not indeed unpremeditated, but altogether unwritten. As I am the most wretched hand in the world to remember my own thoughts and expressions, though I readily recognize them when mentioned by others, my sermons as printed would have borne but a distant resemblance to them as preached, unless I had some memoranda to serve me as a clue. This good office the notes of Miss Covell will perform; and I am much her debtor for the pains she has taken on my account.

My dear friend, if promises were not sacred I should relinquish the idea of publishing. Your expectations are unreasonable, and will certainly be disappointed. The compositions for which you are so eager will not be found the wonderful things which your ardent imagination and strong partiality represent them. When I was in London I half suspected some of you of verging towards idolatry, and my suspicions have not grown weaker. Never, O! never forget that your favourite ministers are frail and sinful creatures, toiling under a body of depravity and death, and who have much more need of your sympathy and prayers than of your overweening good opinion. However if the Master shall own any of my endeavours to promote His praise, and the peace of His people, it is not for me out of a principle of false pride, perhaps, to say nay. I will transmit the manuscript with all possible speed. But you must have patience. The work is not so easy as you seem to suppose amidst a thousand avocations. Besides, though I speak with ease, I write with pain; and although you may pronounce this a paradox, it will not diminish my difficulty.

It is a great mercy, my friend, that though far asunder we can keep up our fellowship. Who would have thought that a bird's feather and cast-off rags would become precious instruments of human intercourse, and of Christian endearment? But our Lord Jesus had his eye upon his pilgrims when he directed to the invention of paper and printing. Most wonderful! I can talk to a friend in London when I am at my desk in the United States! The image of my friend's soul leaps out upon his paper, and travels three thousand miles unimpaired to greet my eye! This interchange of thought is after all a mystery, let the blustering infidel and his Socinian brother say of mysteries what they please. The best of the mystery which they understand the least, is the reciprocation of gracious fellowship which sweetens this life and assures us of a better. Forever blessed be the great God our Saviour that he has pledged his truth, "*Where I am, there shall my servant be also.*" O, shall not our bosoms pant after this translation? We have endless reasons from without, and especially from within, to long for the accomplishment of that promise, *I will see you again.* Yes, my dear Sir, my poor tossed, sin-distracted heart bounds in the prospect, He *will* see us again, *and our heart shall rejoice, and our joy no man*, and no devil, *taketh from us.* He is now our life. If he were not we should soon perish. And he who is our life will appear; and then, aye, there is the triumph which a million of worlds are too mean to purchase—*and then we shall be like him*, for we shall see him as he is. I do not know, and you do not know; it may be questioned whether the redeemed in heaven, or the angels of God know, what is meant by that likeness to Jesus which shall flow from *seeing* him as he is. The day shall declare it. But it shall come; yes, as certainly as these blue heavens are stretched over our heads, it *shall* come, and there shall be gathered all the children of the kingdom to go no more out. The hope is too mighty to enter into our hearts now but by little and little; it would break them were it to flow in with its glory. Surely, this is worth all our self-denial, and all our anguish. We must walk by *faith*, my Christian brother. We must enjoy by *believing*, and leave explanation and sight to their own season.

Ever yours,

J. M. MASON.

TO MISS S. E. COVELL.

NEWARK, NEW JERSEY, September 8th, 1803.

AFTER Miss Covell's kind note of September 15th, 1802, which was handed to me by Mr. Bignell a few days ago, she will excuse the liberty of a few lines to thank her for the obligation which her goodness has imposed on me by transcribing and transmitting such notes of my sermons as were in her possession. Small as this service appears in her own eyes, it is by no means small in mine, as it furnishes me with the general track of thought pursued in my discourses. This was the principal thing needed to enable me to prepare them for the press, having never committed to paper the slightest memorandum even of the divisions of most of them. I could hardly forbear smiling at her ingenuity in sending her boon by the hand of *apology*, but it was with a different sensation that I read of her having written the greater part of the notes, "in much agitation and distress of mind." The "severe illness of a most valuable and indulgent mother," would have rendered a request for troublesome occupation on my account little less than cruel, had I been apprised of it; but her condescension in such circumstances only enhances the favour. She has not acquainted me with the issue of that afflictive dispensation. Whatever it was, I am persuaded that she is not unprovided with principles which can convert, and have converted it to a gracious use. Had I never heard of her, through the medium of her friend Mrs. Wood, her own letter would have been a sufficient voucher for my placing her from this time on the list of my Christian acquaintances. I say *acquaintances;* for Christianity, my dear Miss Covell, is not encumbered with the dry and distant ceremonial of this hollow-hearted world. Honest as truth, affectionate as charity, it is frank and confidential toward all who bear the image of our Lord Jesus. They who know *him*, know and love each other; they have sweet and sublime fellowship; and the reason why their heart-strings when they are swayed by proper influences vibrate in the exactest unison, is, that they are united by faith to the Son of God. He "lives in them;" and the stroke which thrills along the nerves of even the feeblest member of his body is the pulsation of his loving heart. This is the secret cause of Christian sympathy. Their fellowship with each other flows from "*their fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.*" This, too, puts the characteristic difference between the friendship of the world and the friendship of the church, between the loves of nature and the charities of grace. Nothing but that "blessed Gospel" which fools condemn and angels study, can form the idea, far less produce the reality of a love which combines purity with ardour; and of which the very ardour the purity; which is delicate without affectation, and plain shields without rudeness; which grows in respect as it grows in familiarity; for the more intimate Christians are as Christians, the more do they discern in each other the likeness of that Saviour whom they adore; which instead of impairing, strengthens the affinities of human life. May the gracious Redeemer keep you, my dear Miss Covell, in his way, and in his *school* till he shall have fulfilled in you all "*the good pleasure* of his goodness and the work of faith with power." A life near to Jesus is the only life worth living in this world, or the next. May you enjoy much of this blessed life! and never forget that it is intimately connected with clear views of the doctrines of grace. The heart must feed upon the fruits of a sanctified understanding. Grace be with you!

Yours in the best bonds,

J. M. MASON.

Private charity united with his public spirit. This frequently took the form of an agency for transmitting benefactions from Britain to obscure friends in this country. An instance appears in the subjoined letter:—

MR. M. TO A. SIMPSON, Esq.

NEWARK, NEW JERSEY, Sept. 3rd, 1803.

MY DEAR SIR: I am ashamed that your letter of the 31st August, 1802, was not acknowledged in due season. It had accidentally fallen by, and was not recovered till lately. You doubtless know that I drew upon Messrs. Down, Thornton & Co. for the £50 deposited with them in my name to the use of Mrs. Ann C., of Schenectady. Bills upon London being two per cent above par, I sold my draught for £51 sterling, or $266 66. The money was remitted to Mrs. C., and I have her receipt under date of November 6th, 1802. The result of my inquiries is, that she bears an unblemished character, and is respected by the most respectable inhabitants of Schenectady. There is reason to think that for some months previous to the supply sent by her brother-in-law, she had been supported by the bounty of strangers. My friend who carried her the money, wrote me that she was exceedingly affected and grateful. Whether she means to remain in America or not, I have not heard; but suppose that she will need assistance from time to time. Between New York and Schenectady, which is about 170 miles north of the city, there is easy and frequent intercourse. I can at all times forward anything. It will give me much pleasure and no trouble.

Will you do me the favour to present my respectful thanks to Mr. Cunningham, for his liberal donation to our Seminary? I hope that neither he nor any of our British benefactors will have cause to lament their generosity. But they are too well acquainted with human nature and human affairs to expect that such a design as ours can be carried into effect without labour and patience, when it must depend for habitual support upon contributions from plain people, to whom it is a novelty, and who are not well qualified to estimate its importance by any other criterion than its *effects*. The library, to which almost the whole of what I collected in Britain was appropriated, is both an occasion and a pledge of future exertion. Of my *personal* efforts, neither its friends nor enemies, if any, will entertain much doubt. The proposal for both the seminary and the means of procuring an adequate revenue, originated not long ago, with myself; and the progress of the plan has been greater than either the timid or the sanguine expected. We must now sow in hope: in due season we shall reap if we faint not.

The inestimable blessing which America enjoys in being at peace, while war has kindled fresh flames in Europe, is not without alloy. The hand of God is again upon us, by sending the Destroyer to the city of New York. At a period earlier than usual, the dreaded *yellow fever* has renewed its visit, and thousands of the inhabitants have left their dwellings. One-half of the whole population, which is rated at about sixty-five thousand, has deserted the place. The neighbouring parts of the island, with the towns and villages of the adjacent country, are filled with fugitives. The effect upon the trade of our port you may easily imagine. Would to God that the effect upon our thoughtless citizens, in persuading them to consider their ways, bore any proportion to its temporal influence! I fear that the accusation will *continue* to lie at our door, "*I have sent among you the pestilence after the manner of Egypt, yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord.*" Past experience affords but melancholy reflection, and verifies Solomon's adage, in its application to communities as well as individuals: *Though thou bray a fool in a mortar with a pestle, yet will not his folly depart from him.* Happy they who, in the hour of calamity, have a refuge in the God of their salvation.

The subject of the following two letters will not be confounded with Dr. A. Hunter, the Professor of Edinburgh. Dr. Henry Hunter, of London, author of "Sacred Biography," and other learned works, received Mr. Mason into his cordial friendship, and in various ways gave him warm support in his efforts for the seminary. His death was mentioned in a letter from Mr. Hardcastle, as well as in the one here referred to. Mr. Mason's sympathy found utterance in letters to surviving friends:

TO MRS. DR. HUNTER, LONDON.

NEWARK, NEW JERSEY, Sept. 7th, 1803.

I LITTLE thought, my dear Madam, when last I had the satisfaction of seeing you in London, that the revolution of a short period would cast so thick a shade over your comforts. The news of your bereavement reached me some time before I was compelled to admit it as a fact. Amidst the sympathy and condolence of numerous and attentive friends, my voice would have been feeble; and if it comes later than that of others, it comes, nevertheless, from a heart which will retain among its last recollections the great and unwearied kindnesses of your hospitable house. We must be made to feel, my dear friend, what we are accustomed to acknowledge before the throne of our God and Father, that we are children of grief, because children of transgression. Ah, how deeply in our bosoms is engraven the admonition, that we are "born to sorrow as the sparks fly upward!" And how wretched would be our condition under the chastenings of God, if we had not His gospel to brighten our prospects, and His love to soothe our spirits! Blessed be His name, He has taught us a secret which the sons and daughters of earth can neither find out nor comprehend—the secret of "glorying in tribulation." It is in the hour of anguish that the christian lifts up his head. It is in the failure of earthly delights, and earthly supports, that he may taste the sweetness of new covenant mercy, and feel the strength of the Rock of Ages. Here is the preëminence of believers in Jesus: their religion is at hand when they need its consolations. "He who hath smitten, will heal: he who hath torn, will bind up." You know this, my dear madam; your refuge is not now to seek; you "know whom you have believed;" and how rich is the privilege of laying your aching head upon the bosom of your Saviour! Half his tenderness and truth—half his grace and condescension, could not be estimated, if we were never to "walk in trouble." It is a thought—it is an assurance for which the universe cannot afford an exchange, that our glorious high Priest has a "*fellow-feeling with our infirmity.*" Yes, the Son of God has learned *by experience* to sympathise with his people. "Seeing that he hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to *succour those that are tempted.*" Amidst the hosannahs of heaven, he does not forget that he was once a "man of sorrow, and acquainted with grief." Amidst the worship of angels, his eye is upon the tears of his afflicted followers; and he has a thousand blessings to compensate the sacrifices which they are called to make. But this, though wonderful, and though a source of ceaseless gratitude, is not all. He has not so much *threatened*, as *promised* the rod. It is in his own hand, and it is plucked from the tree of life. It is an expression of his regard; for "whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth." We could not live without his discipline. The design and the fruit of it is, that we shall "be partakers of His holiness." He has not engaged that our cup shall contain no *bitterness;* but he has pledged, that it shall contain no *poison.* There is no death in it. He puts not into our hand a cup which he himself has not tasted. And we may assure ourselves, that while he corrects, he cannot curse; for "there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." All this is added to that unspeakable mercy, that you do not "mourn as one that hath no hope." Oh, let this persuasion turn the note of complaint into a song of joy. Our work is to be "followers of them, who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises." Yet a little while, dear Madam, and your present path through "the valley of the shadow of death," shall terminate in light and life that shall never end. We must, indeed, die; but Jesus went through death into his kingdom. We, too, must pass through death, not merely that we may perform the last act of conformity to Him on this side of heaven, but that we may evince the power of His grace, which can make a dying worm more than conqueror over all the hosts of hell. Then the "God of peace shall bruise Satan under our feet," once for all; and his bruised head shall be in the place of a stepping-stone, from which our victorious feet shall step upon the threshold of our Father's house! And He, who is "the Resurrection and the Life," shall, in due season, "change our vile body, and fashion it like unto His own glorious body." In the mean time, "thy Maker is thy husband; the Lord of Hosts is his name." He will "put your tears into His bottle;" He will "record them in His book." I commend you to the "husband of the widow," praying for the accomplishment of His promise to you, "Even to old age I am He, and even to hoar hairs I will carry thee."

Give my affectionate regard to Miss Hunter, and William. I am sure their filial love will cherish and cheer you.

Yours most sincerely,

J. M. MASON.

MR. M. TO ROBERT SPEAR, Esq., MANCHESTER.

NEWARK, NEW JERSEY, Sept. 10, 1803.

MY DEAR SIR: My omission to acknowledge my obligation for your very kind attentions at Manchester, I place on the worst ground for myself, that I may leave to you nothing but the pleasure of forgiving. I cannot tell how it has happened, but such is the fact, that I have been the greatest delinquent towards friends who lie nearest my heart. I know that they are not inclined to censure or suspension; and as those who murmur least must expect to bear the most, I have presumed on their goodness while I have discharged where I would use fewer liberties. Thus friendship has been waiting at the door, if not of ceremony, at least of exaction.

I often pass in review the scenes of London, Manchester, Edinburgh, Glasgow, &c., which are all endeared to me, for reasons never to be forgotten. Although there is no ground on which I can feed myself with the prospect of another voyage to Britain, yet I cannot endure the thought of perpetual separation even in this world from those with whom I have been permitted to "take sweet counsel together." Christianity imparts a zest even to temporal comforts, and stamps upon the society which it influences, a dignity and value which nothing else can replace. Venerable John Ryland was right in calling the sons and daughters of frolic and dissipation mere "fools in the science of pleasure." I have frequently thought and said, that the Gospel is necessary to teach men *how to enjoy this world.* And for the next, to which we are hastening, who can compare with Christians? It is there, my dear Sir, that we triumph; there that our faith has the victory. It is in that better world, in that heavenly kingdom, in the vision and likeness of our Redeemer, that every principle worth cultivating will display its beauty and its power. May it be our happiness to walk through this vale of tears in the strength of the Lord God; in the purifying communion of his love; in the elevation of that hope which "maketh not ashamed." Toward the spread of these blessings I trust our seminary will be instrumental. A flying rumour has informed me that the bounty of Manchester has been extended to it. If so, I beg leave, in behalf of all concerned, to return thanks, first to Him who gave our benefactors the means and the heart, and then to the benefactors themselves, who "have dispersed," who "have given to the poor," praying that their "righteousness may endure forever." Messrs. Down, Thornton and Co. are the depositaries of contributions.

Practical difficulties in the way of obtaining ministers from Scotland still remained. The nature of these is apparent from subsequent correspondence. Unlooked for, and in some cases perhaps, reckless expenses were incurred in bringing over ministers. Nor were these ministers themselves always of a class to promise much usefulness in this country. But let the letters speak for themselves:—

MR. M. TO THE REV. WILLIAM KIDSTON.

NEW YORK, NOV. 27, 1803.

MY DEAR SIR: The dissatisfaction of friends on account of my silence I had anticipated, not without uneasiness, because, on the one hand, it was impossible to escape their censure, and on the other I found it equally impossible to gratify their reasonable expectations. Apologies seldom succeed; and in the art of making them, I have always been a bungler. But I tell you the truth, that for a considerable time after my return, I had not leisure to write to anybody—a few lines to my uncle excepted. More, much more of the public business of the churches than I can execute without omissions, which are sure to raise clamours against me at home, is devolved upon me; and this, added to domestic, congregational and incidental avocations, occupied me almost to distraction. I have not been able to read a *single volume* since I came back from Britain, though it is now more than thirteen months! Besides, I had not a small correspondence before; and my visit to your hospitable land has increased it so much, that it amounts to a very serious affair to one who has the charge of *two* congregations, and who frequently is not permitted to enjoy his study one hour in a week. In short, I am obliged to take my correspondents in sets; and though I was deceived in the hope that my intercourse with my Glasgow friends had left an impression which would have screened me from the charge of *atrocious* neglect, yet they will perhaps be a little pacified when they are told that it is only of late that I have attempted to discharge my epistolary devoirs. With Edinburgh, it was natural to begin. From London, a package fraught with kindness, and *spiced* with scolding, required prompt attention. And tertio, I turn to your honours of Glasgow. The best way, I believe, is, as you advise, to be a *better bairn in future*, and as you talk about a "circular," I do, by these presents, what I think far preferable, constitute and appoint *you* to be my advocate-general in and for the good city of Glasgow, and its dependencies, and all other places where your prudence shall think fit to exercise this your office. If nothing else will do, I put my friends upon their devotions to cherub-faced charity.

The brethren who came with me are dispersed in every direction. Mr. Laurie is settled down in the City of Washington, where he preaches with acceptance. Mr. Scrimgeour is at the town of Newburgh, seventy miles north of this place, on the western bank of the Hudson River. Mr. Calderhead has accepted a call somewhere beyond the Alleghany mountains, in Pennsylvania. Mr. Easton is, as I have heard, about being placed at Broadalbane,* some forty miles north west from Albany. Mr. Bishop is going on with great spirit in Kentucky. Mr. Forest has been to Canada; and, it is rumoured, means to go home again. I know not whether the report be well founded. Mr. Burns, who lately arrived, is at present in New York, where his labours are far from being disesteemed. We are still most distressed for want of help. Had not Mr. Burns appeared, the second congregation in this city would have been unsupplied almost a twelvemonth. The cry for more, more, is reiterated from the brethren who first ventured to give us a helping hand. I cannot, however, conceal a difficulty of which your discretion will make a proper use. It is altogether right that they who come out at our invitation should come out at our expense. No objection has ever been offered to this. But the infant funds of our Synod have been drained by repeated heavy demands to their last shilling. The circumstance of most of the preachers bringing wives with them, though unquestionably fair, has doubled the cost of their voyage. For those who may follow, it will be necessary that their passage money be advanced on your side of the water. It will be repaid by our churches, but our finances must have time to recruit. Cannot an arrangement be made on this subject with Messrs. McGoun of Greenock? They may perhaps allow the passage money to remain unpaid till we are able to meet it. Or would not some of our more opulent friends in Glasgow loan as much as may be requisite for a certain period? I pray this matter may be managed with so much delicacy as not to hinder preachers from coming, if possible. Were it not for peculiar reasons, I would undertake to obtain what I now ask, from my own people. But besides the ruinous derangement of our commerce by the yellow fever, and other local embarrassments at present, they are in fact the *paymaster-general* of our churches in other things. Consult well, I beseech you. Without some temporary provision of this kind, by you or ourselves, I am in danger, from my personal agency, of being involved to an extent far beyond my pecuniary resources, and fatal to my own, and my family's comfort. You cannot misunderstand me; and I commit myself to your prudence, and that of a few others.

---

* He was finally settled at Montreal, Canada.

MR. M. TO REV. JOHN DICK, D.D., GLASGOW.

New York, Dec. 1, 1803.

YOU are too little a man of ceremony, my dear Sir, to exact punctilious explanations of ill-looking appearances, when you have a favourable expositor in your own bosom; and thus far I am too much like you to make them, when I know that well informed candour would forbear the stile of censure.

Notices have doubtless been sent from the brethren who sailed with me both of their reception and of their impressions. Of the latter, they are the best judges and reporters; and if the former was not agreeable, the failure did not flow from the want of attempts to render it so. The cry for help is as loud and unceasing as ever. Wide scope for exertion and success is open for those who are not afraid of the *cross;* and for those who are, the Son of God has provided no employment in his gospel. The slender assistance of six ministers, now scattered abroad upon the face of the land, has proved of material service. Double that number could be at no loss for scenes of labour and usefulness. It is of the utmost consequence that centers, from which sound principles and vigorous order may be diffused should be fixed, as speedily and with as much advantage of *coöperation* as possible. It is vain and foolish to place down ministers at an immense distance from each other, when there are unsettled and unsupplied vacancies near at hand, and indispensable to the common strength. It has been for some time my sober judgment that we are in danger of running into this extreme; and that by insulating men and congregations, to convert both by degrees into practical independence. And therefore we require considerable aids, that the state of society may not force us into a violation of our first principle; and that in order to maintain it, we may not lose opportunities to plant Presbyterian posts in important spots. In the way of obtaining adequate assistance, even if your preachers are inclined to come over, there is an embarrassment, and that a serious one, arising from the lack of proper *funds.* You will immediately perceive, when thinking on this article, that it is desirable to have as many of those who come hither as possible, *single* men. Not, by any means however, as if we would repudiate an able man to save the expenses of his wife! However, as "there is reason in roasting oysters," I hope no offence can be taken from the suggestion, that when double or triple expenses are incurred on account of a man's family, there ought to be something in himself to reconcile, or rather to content all parties, on striking the balance. This inter nos. You cannot make an indiscreet use of it.

Our Seminary, on which we are intently set, and which is retarded by the incessant draughts on our little treasury, must be, under the Lord's blessing, our chief reliance. An ignorant, unqualified ministry is becoming every day more numerous, and less respectable. The thought of christian interests devolving into their hands, fills one with alarm and horror. At the same time, by reducing the standard of ministerial character, it encourages the obtrusive and fanatical pretences of lay preachers. I view this, however the opinion may be reprobated by serious but unreflecting people, as one of the most artful cards which the devil ever played to destroy christianity altogether. Let men once be persuaded that the Lord Jesus has left no other commission to preach than that which every one finds in his own knowledge, piety and zeal, (of which he is to judge), and there is an end of all authoritative measures; and what kind of a community that must be, in which the government or officers have no authority, it is not worth while to dispute. I do not see how this blow can be warded off without a miracle, unless there be so great a difference and such priority on the side of lawful ministers, as to put the usurpers out of countenance and out of credit. Two or three self-sent jockies from England, have tried their hand among us; but we are not Englishmen, and they have not hitherto received the support which they expected.

The memoir which I was to transmit concerning my deceased black friend Piero, I have not been able to prepare. I am almost crushed with the load of business which is laid upon my shoulders.

In a letter of 1805, he writes: "It is impossible for us to be bound for the passage of every man who chooses to emigrate, when we have no agent to judge whether we are likely to be the better for his presence. Our General Synod have been obliged to pass a resolution declining all future responsibility for passages for which they shall not previously contract. The measure was absolutely necessary in self defence. Our little funds have been so drained by claims of this sort, as to endanger the existence of our Seminary. And as there are always two at making a bargain, we should like to have our word in deciding on the quality of the goods. By the present mode, this is not likely to improve."

The following letter from one of the best of men, whose name has already appeared, and must frequently again appear in these pages, and whose memory will be blessed by the future millions of China, containing many things of interest to the philanthropist and Christian, as well as to the friends of Mr. Mason, cannot be denied a place here:—

MR. M. TO J. HARDCASTLE.

London, February, 1804.

Rev. and Dear Sir: We have now the satisfaction of acknowledging the receipt of your letter under date of 1st Aug. and 1st Sept. We had been very long indulging the hope of hearing from you, and the strong impression which you have made on our affections, and which I believe is indelible, made your long silence a considerable trial to our patience. At last, however, the most welcome epistle hath reached us; and I can assure you, that its length, its interesting matter, and its affectionate spirit, form the most acceptable compensation which we can possibly receive for its delay. It confirms, however, the strong desire we have to hear from you as frequently as may consist with your convenience. We claim this from the sympathy which is due to that ardent and undiminishing affection which we bear towards you. In my family, you are frequently the topic of our evening conversation. We ofttimes resort to those few printed sermons of yours which we possess, to enlarge our acquaintance with those interesting subjects which are connected with our redemption, or to elevate our affections to the region of unsullied purity, the residence of perfect spirits. We recall also to our recollection the pleasant interviews which we occasionally had together, but find the satisfaction mingled with regret that they were not more frequent, and that their early renewal is such an improbable event. These are feelings, however, which form a part of the imperfections of our present state, and are a branch also of its needful discipline. They force upon us an attention to the great object of a christian's life, the performance of duty, and lead us to wait for its future retribution. In the mean time it is innocent and useful gratification, which epistolary intercourse affords Christian friends who are placed in distant parts of the earth, to accomplish in their respective spheres the designs of Providence, till they shall associate in the general assembly of those who never transgress, and whose robes are washed in the blood of the Lamb.

I should have been much gratified if the contribution of our English brethren had been larger. Had it been possible for you to protract your visit, I cannot doubt but this would have been the case. The object to which it is consecrated is of high import, and of its progress from time to time we shall be happy to hear. In the mean time, we shall offer our intercessions for the Divine blessing, and mingle therewith our thanksgivings for the extensive grace manifested in various ways towards the American churches, the reports of which gladden our hearts, awaken our gratitude, and stimulate our languishing zeal.

Blessed be our covenant God, who, in the midst of darkness, dismay, calamity, and I must add, profligacy, still cheers our hearts by the demonstrations of his goodness and the outpourings of his spirit in various parts, and encourages the hope that brighter scenes are in preparation, and that an era of distinguished grace will rise out of the confusion which the wickedness of man seems likely to produce among the nations of the earth. We have lately received very exhilarating accounts from the Cape of Good Hope. The labours of our missionaries among the poor degraded Hottentots and Boschemen have been wonderfully sanctioned by the influences of the Holy Spirit. Mr. Kicherer, whose station was at Tak river, about 500 miles from Cape Town, has lately visited us, accompanied by three converted Hottentots, fruits of his ministry and members of his church. Their gifts and grace are so great as to furnish a remarkable demonstration of the rapidity with which a poor, ignorant, and brutalized sinner, may become wise and holy, when the Spirit becomes his instructor. Perhaps the churches in London have never received a purer and higher gratification, than by the visit of these strangers. Their replies to the questions proposed to them, and their addresses to the immense congregations before whom they appeared, were not merely satisfactory in a high degree, but excited universal surprise, and occasioned, I believe, much thanksgiving to God. Mr. Kicherer left with us the narrative of his mission, which we have printed, a few copies of which I will forward you for distribution. I am persuaded you will read it with much satisfaction. This event was the more welcome, as we had received few letters from the brother while in Africa, and had not anticipated the success with which God has crowned his labours. He is a man of singular endowments, uncommonly devoted to the service of his Great Master, and partaking largely of his meek and humble spirit. They are all now in Holland, waiting and longing for the means of conveyance to their beloved brethren, in the desert, where their station is, and I suppose they more frequently see the wild beasts of the forest, than the face of a civilized human being. They will be accompanied by five additional missionaries, who are natives either of Holland or Germany, and who are engaged by our Society to strengthen and enlarge the good work in that colony.

It is now a long time since we received any letters or journals from Dr. Vander Kemp, but we understand that the Society in Holland have received some intelligence concerning him which is highly satisfactory, both as to the state of his health, which had been much impaired, and as to his success among the Hottentots. We hope therefore to have an early opportunity of laying before the religious public some interesting particulars concerning him.

We are now on the point of sending out six other missionaries. Three of them are intended for Ceylon and take with them a letter of introduction from the Secretary of State to the Governor of that place. The rest are going to India, with the view to settle in the Mysore country, where, it appears, many of the natives are disgusted with idolatry, and are panting for Christian instruction. Mr. Gericke, the Danish missionary, said to be a man of similar spirit with the late Mr. Swartz, has lately visited that country as a missionary, and reports that whole villages are throwing away their idols and are prepared to receive the ministers of Christ. This, if really a fact, is certainly an extraordinary one; and, when combined with many others, perhaps justifies the expectation, that the century upon which we have just entered may be distinguished by great improvements in the moral condition of the world, as well as by great alterations in its political state.

No doubt our Christian friends in America feel considerable anxiety at this critical period for the fate of England. Indeed, all the nations of Europe seem waiting in awful suspense the result of the approaching conflict with France, as if all the great interests of civilized society were involved therein; and I believe we partake of the good wishes of the majority in every country, and have an interest in the prayers of our Christian brethren throughout the world. It is understood that the preparations of the enemy are on a scale of tremendous extent and in alliance therewith are the still more formidable hosts of our national and individual sins. These alarm our apprehensions, and lead us to deprecate the righteous judgments of God. On the other hand, we have reason to think that within the last ten or tweny years the kingdom of our Lord has been greatly enlarged in our native country; that it is daily increasing, and that the influences of God's spirit have been more extensively communicated, and have produced a very increased degree of zeal for his glory. These are encouraging circumstances; and although in the most calamitous events that could befall us, we must acknowledge, "Righteous art thou, O Lord, when thou judgest!" Yet I think it has not been the usual procedure of Divine Providence to overwhelm and destroy a nation thus circumstanced. It would be a singular, perhaps a new case in the Divine administration. I trust therefore, that although it may be requisite for us to receive a measure of correction, we shall nevertheless be favoured with deliverance, and shall have occasion to ascribe salvation to our God. Instead of the utter destruction of this country, is there not ground to think that the principal characteristics, the Divine dispensations on which we are entering, are judgment and ruin on the interests of Anti-Christ? and that notwithstanding present appearances, the great and decisive struggle will take place on the European continent, where in almost every country, notwithstanding the profession and establishment of Christianity, the political and eclesiastical institutions are such, that the general propagation of vital religion is, humanly speaking, an impracticable thing? The war, or series of wars which are approaching, however calamitous or revolutionary they may prove, may yet lead to a result highly auspicious to the kingdom of Christ. This anticipation at least cheers the mind under the impending glooms which every day thicken upon us, and helps to sustain our spirits under that dismay which would otherwise too much depress them.

You will most likely have heard that the widow of our late friend Dr. Hunter did not long survive her husband. I have reason to believe that a letter from you to Miss Hunter would be a particular consolation to her under the afflictive dispensations which have attended her.

March 7. I hope this day will be memorable in its effects, by means of a society formed this forenoon, called *The British and Foreign Bible Society*, the meeting for which has been well attended and supported by Christians of every description. Its object is the most general distribution of the Scriptures in every language and country, so far as the society may have the means of effecting it.

I am with sincere affection and respect, &c.,

JOSEPH HARDCASTLE.

MR. M. TO MR. E. MASON, EDINBURGH.

New York, April 10, 1804.

My Dear Uncle: Yours of the 25th January came to hand on the 6th instant. Blessed be the giver of all good, for preserving you all in life and in some degree of comfort. My dear aunt can hardly expect, through the remainder of her pilgrimage, much bodily strength. But this will render more precious to her heart those supports of the gospel to which I trust she is not a stranger. Wonderful power, wonderful grace, wonderful triumph! Power, grace and triumph purely Christian, that though our *outward man perish* yet the *inward man is renewed day by day.* A believer has never in this world so firm a hold of the *house not made with hands* as when the *earthly house of this tabernacle* threatens to be *dissolved*; nor is so stongly marked for immortality, as when he *has the sentence of death* most distinctly *within himself.* This is one of the gladdening mysteries which though hidden from the world, pour forth their peace and joy into his soul, in virtue of his union with the *Resurrection and the Life.* I hope that Aggie and Christy, whom I tenderly love, study their mother's comfort. Much is now in their power to repay for her tenderness, anxieties and sufferings for them. Margaret's marriage was an interesting event in the history of your family. I pray that grace may be multiplied to the youthful pair. I shall write them shortly. She should have had a letter from me before now, but really I have been pressed with more multiplied business since I came home than ever before.

On hearing of Dr. Hunter's death, Mr. Mason wrote the letter of condolence, contained in a former page, to the widow; but before it reached her, she herself was summoned to join her husband in that better world to which he had gone. This gave occasion for the following to their daughter:—

MR. M. TO MISS AGNES HUNTER.

New York, May 1, 1804.

My Dear Miss Hunter: Some time since, a report reached me that your excellent mother had followed your lamented father into that unseen world where, I trust, they are reunited in the purity of immortals. Deep is the wound which the death of relatives plants in the bosom, but sweet, my friend, is that consolation which the Gospel of Jesus pours into the wound. There is nothing in Christianity which forbids our tears, or would suppress our sighs. The Saviour wept, and why may not we? or why should we think a groan pusillanimous, when groans have issued from his holy breast? But to bear prosperity with temper, and affliction with cheerfulness, it is necessary that we be Christians indeed. The world has no prescription for an agonizing spirit. Nor will a form of godliness serve our turn, when nature's pain is to be converted into profit, and nature's horror into blessing. To know the Lord Jesus as the Lord my righteousness, my strength, my refuge, is to be preferred to whatever the thoughtless can challenge as their own; and when the hand of God disconcerts, distracts, or stupifies *them*, the peace of God which passeth all understanding, will keep *our* hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. The end, the end, my dear Miss Hunter, is the great object of our concern. This well adjusted, and fixed on the basis of God's most gracious promise, all the rest is light, is easy, is beneficial. In this connexion stand all the provisions which His mercy has made for support and consolation. "A father of the fatherless, and a husband of the widow, is God in his holy habitation." His word is sure, "A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children;" so that you may say, "When my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." If we have relied upon his truth for our future hope, we may do it also for our *present* comfort. Godliness, and that alone, has the promise of this life, and of the life to come. Your friends, I hear, have not been backward in their proofs of attachment; but I feel too much interested in your welfare to be satisfied with vague rumour. Let me have the pleasure of a line from you when it shall accord with your convenience. Did my letter to your mother arrive before her removal had superseded all earthly condolence? How is your father's place supplied?

Your sincere friend,

J. M. MASON.

The letters of Mr. Hardcastle, sometimes touching upon public events, but more generally upon plans of benevolence and the prospects of the church, always struck Mr. Mason with thrilling interest, as his answers show:—

MR. M. TO MR. HARDCASTLE, LONDON.

NEW YORK, May 1, 1804.

MY DEAR FRIEND: Your letters of the 9th February and of March 7th, have arrived. For both, my hearty thanks are due. The pressure of various kinds of business, which always crowd upon me about the time of our annual Synods, hinders me at present from conversing (for it is conversation), particularly about some points in your very animating letters.

Such "good news from a far country" is, indeed, as "cold water to a thirsty soul." Yet it is sad, my friend, but I cannot dissemble that I consider the astonishing efforts to spread the Gospel as one class of those events, which, while they serve to "prepare the way of the Lord," and hold a most conspicuous place among His arrangements for introducing the latter day glory, do, at the same time, warn the churches of approaching darkness, and call aloud to every Christian to be *at his post*. That this generation, or the next, or the following, is to see *lasting peace*, or *regularly increasing triumph of truth*, is a hope which I would, but dare not, cherish. The whole moral state of the world, the prodigious changes which must happen within a period comparatively short, and the solemn declarations of prophetical Scripture—all combine against such a hope. That the world has not seen its worst times, there is great reason to believe; that the church has seen hers, I can neither affirm nor deny; but that waters of a full and bitter cup are yet to be wrung out to her, cannot, I think, be successfully disputed. O, how soothing, how refreshing, how transporting, that our Lord Jesus reigns!—that He looks tenderly upon us!—that He will infallibly cause the "wrath of man to praise Him!" and will "restrain the remainder of wrath!" Dear Mr. Hardcastle, what an hour is this! My blood freezes; all hell teems with mischief, and all heaven with mercy. The conflict will be such as when heaven and hell conflict; this little globe the scene; and these souls and bodies the objects! I should sink but for that cheering voice—"As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so is the Lord round about His people." How natural the question of unbelief, "What will become of such an atom as I?" But how prompt the answer of faith, "In the time of trouble, He shall hide me in His pavilion; in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me! He shall set me upon a rock, and *now*,"—yes, there's the victory,—"now my head shall be lifted up above mine enemies." Come, my friend, "let us enter into our chambers and shut the door about us; let us hide ourselves for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast." For "behold the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity. The earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain."

I began with a short note, but my pen is indulging a digression to which it is very prone.

No time shall be lost or exertion spared in starting our Seminary. But think of the disparity of circumstances here and with you, and make allowances accordingly. As you have opportunity, do me the favour to thank our benefactors in behalf of our churches. My kindest regards towards Mrs. Hardcastle and your dear family, are, as you will consider them, a matter of course.

CHAPTER XIII.

1803—1804.

HOME CORRESPONDENCE.

Letter to Mrs. Boorman—Letter to Mrs. Brown—Letter from Mr. Brown—Letter to Mr. J. Nourse.

TO MRS. BOORMAN.

NEWARK, N.J., Sept. 12, 1803.

MY DEAR MADAM: I mingle my tears with yours on the very afflicting dispensation which has bereaved you of your lovely daughter. What shall we say? He is a high and Holy Sovereign with whom we have to do. "He giveth no account of any of his matters." Even the affections of a mother must bow. His chastenings are severe, but they afford no just cause of murmur. *Sinners* have reason to praise, but none to repine, so long as they are not shut up under the condemnation and in the perdition of ungodly men. Charming indeed has been your domestic circle; sweet the disposition of your children; happy your heart in the enjoyment of their uncommonly filial love. Remember the past with gratitude: and for the present put your hand upon your lips. "I was dumb," said the Psalmist! "I opened not my lips, because *thou* didst it." Ah, it is so; and "it is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not." "Shall we indeed receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not also receive evil?" Much, very much remains to deserve and to demand your thankfulness. The mighty One of Israel might have taken *all;* but he has not. You are not yet a widow mourning over the bier of her last child. Unutterable goodness has left you a daughter preëminent in natural and gracious excellences. It has left you sons who will cherish you with tenderness, and who, if they follow, as I pray the God of salvation they may, their sister's footsteps, will render you still a very happy mother. But the sanctifying, as well as pardoning mercy of our God, is the all-important concern. And he is rich in mercy; he is ready to forgive; he waits to be gracious. His very scourgings are in loving-kindness. Seasons of sorrow, are, in a peculiar manner, seasons in which his ear is open. The rod is often the harbinger of everlasting blessing. Send up your cry to God in the heavens. Send it up in the name of that Jesus who is "able to save *to the uttermost* all that come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Your refuge for peace is in the covenant righteousness of an Almighty and compassionate Saviour; and for support in his promised strength. Acquaintance with him as *our own* Saviour is ever valuable, but oh, how valuable when we must drink the wormwood and the gall! when the bands of grief gird our loins! when our heart is broken under the stroke of God's hand! It is his blessed office, "to comfort them that mourn;" to "bind up the broken hearted;" to compensate all the anguish of his severer visitations. Dear madam, nothing can be a portion for our souls, which there is any danger of losing. The Lord teaches us the lesson often by bitter experience. Himself, himself alone is our satisfying good. Precious affliction, if it issue in bringing you close to himself; and to a life of faith in him as the fountain of living waters.

I know not what the prospects of this day are for your Robert.* The Lord spare him, or ripen him for the kingdom! and that will be far better than staying with you. Aim, oh, aim at giving him up implicitly—*without stipulation* or *reserve*—into the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ. Sweet is the resignation of the gospel; and amiable in the sight of God, that will which is sunk in his will. Dear little Marcus,† I hope, is concerned to surrender himself up in soul and body to that precious Redeemer who honours infant piety, and loves the voice of infant prayer. James, surely, is not insensible to the privilege as well as necessity, of seeking the Lord and his strength, in the days of his youth. How great the attainment to have all things for eternity settled *soon*. "My soul is safe, and death cannot hurt me, and the tribunal of God has nothing to terrify me. I am a Christian, and partake of Him who is the Resurrection and the Life: therefore will I not fear." What a triumph! May you my dear Madam, and yours, know it in its glory! I commend you to "God who raiseth up those who are cast down," beseeching him to bestow upon him "everlasting consolation and good hope through grace;" and am,

---

* Who was lying at the point of death.

† Her youngest child.

Yours in unfeigned sympathy,
J. M. MASON.

Early in 1804, his sister Mrs. Brown was well nigh prostrated by a stroke which he very tenderly shared with her, and he thus gave utterance to his feelings:—

MR. M. TO MRS. BROWN, FRANKFORT.

NEW YORK, Feb. 15, 1804.

THIS moment, my beloved sister, have I received the intelligence of the departure of your little Alfred. It is well! Is it not, my sister? The Father of Spirits has called away your son, and he doeth all things well. You gave him up, I trust, to the God of salvation long before now; and should you complain that he has taken you at your word? We are very imperfect judges of what is good for us. A stroke of affliction is often the sharp, but beneficent remedy against evils which are near, and are prevented by it. You know not what snares were laid for yourself and family which by this dispensation you may escape. You know not from what mischiefs your boy has been rescued, nor what sword has been turned aside from passing through your own soul. Let us sit down under the consolation of this promise, "Yea, the Lord will give that which is good." Oh, my sister, we have so many mercies, while we deserve none, that when chastening comes it is but decent for us to "hold our peace." And if these chastenings of the Lord are designed "that we should not be condemned with the world," the silence of submission should be broken by the song of praise. There is nothing in religion to stifle the emotions of nature, or to make the heart a hypocrite; but much to regulate its emotions, to purify its attachments, and to sweeten its griefs. Here my sister is the point of Christian triumph. Alike empty in its bustle and frigid in its comforts, the world has no prescription for a broken heart. And from the grave it turns away pallid and fainting. Thrice charming light of heaven, which, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, shows glorious immortality, and beams the morning of the resurrection into the corruption of the tomb! This, Oh this is the great concern, "to win Christ and be found in him, not having our own righteousness." My sister says Amen! My inmost soul pours out its supplication, that we may "know in whom we have believed;" and then nothing can come really amiss, because nothing can happen to us but by the direction of our God and Father; and nothing can take away our inheritance. That which can die, is no portion for souls which cannot die. "The fountain of life" alone, is equal to our wants. Let us now humbly look and pray for the Lord's blessing upon his rod; that it may teach us to live in *felt* dependence on him; may wean us from idolatrous love; may render us more solicitous for our own and our children's eternal welfare; may keep us in the habit of daily surrendering them up to the Divine disposal; may help us to be ready for that serious hour in which we too shall be gathered to our fathers. They only are happy who need not fear death; and they only have no reason to fear it who have an interest in Jesus. May that interest be sealed upon my sister's heart by the "holy spirit of promise!"

You require no assurance of our sympathy here. Though this family claims the preëminence in the scale of affection, you have not left a friend whose kind and constant inquiries are not a pledge, that all take a particular interest in you and yours.

Your friend, Miss Nicholson, is not without trouble, and may shortly have more, as her father is struggling with illness from which there is little hope of his recovery. The family of sorrow is large. Thanks be to God, that our connexions with it have hitherto been so few! I mean as to personal suffering.

The precious Redeemer, "Bless and keep you!"—be your "refuge and strength!"—your "very present help in time of trouble!"

The effect of a similar letter upon the mind of a distinguished statesman, at the time separated from his family by public duties, cannot fail to interest every thoughtful reader. We learn it from himself:—

TO THE REV. J. M. MASON.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 28, 1804.

MY DEAR SIR: I received with much pleasure your friendly and consolatory letter of the 17th instant, and should have tendered you my warmest acknowledgments for the favor at an earlier day, had not unavoidable causes of delay prevented. The duties of the chair to which I was called in the absence of the Vice-President, who did not resume his seat till yesterday, and a variety of business particularly interesting to the Western country, have fully occupied my time by day, and a weakness in my eyes has for some weeks past put it out of my power to write by candlelight. Indeed had it been otherwise, I do not think I could have written with even tolerable composure in relation to the afflicting event which has made so great an inroad upon the happiness of my little family. I have, my dear brother, seriously endeavoured to resort to those sources of consolation which you have so kindly suggested, and so warmly recommend to my consideration. They have in some measure contributed to the relief and tranquillity of my mind; yet I still feel the wound in every fibre of my heart, and find it a difficult task to submit with due humility and resignation to the sharp discipline to which a gracious God (in mercy I trust) has been pleased to subject me. Had the affliction occasioned by the premature fate of my dear boy, been confined to myself only, I believe I could have borne it with greater firmness; but my fortitude forsakes me when I reflect upon the severe distress which my dear Margaretta must have experienced on so trying an occasion. Few of her sex can lay claim to equal solidity of judgment, strength of mind, and power of self-possession; but on the other hand her sensibility and maternal tenderness are extreme; and in her present delicate situation, especially when deprived of that comfort and support which my duty and affection for the best of women must ever dictate, I could not but dread the consequences from so great a shock; my anxiety and fears on this score have however been much relieved by a letter from herself, and several from my brothers, all of which assure me that the calamity was sustained by her with as much firmness as the nature of the privation could admit of, and that her health has suffered less than could well have been expected. I should have set out on my return home immediately, had not some matters of both a public and a personal nature imperiously required my presence here till the 3d of March. On that day, I fully intend to set out, though I could have wished to postpone my journey somewhat longer—as the bills relative to Louisiana, and to the Western country, are yet depending, and in all probability will not be decided until after that time.

Your enclosure for Margaretta arrived safe and has been forwarded. Be so good as to inform my dear niece Euphemia, that Dr. Mitchel delivered to me her note, with a package for her aunt, which I shall take on with me.

I pray you to present my most affectionate regards to each member of your family, and rest assured that I am,

Dear Sir, with great esteem,
Yours sincerely
J. BROWN.

TO J. NOURSE, Esq., WASHINGTON CITY.

New York, April 7, 1804.

My Dear Friend: Your last letter has slumbered long, long enough to try even *your* patience. You see how it is: We take the largest liberties with those we love most; and they who are least given to complaining are sure to have the greatest reason for it.

The Treasurer of our Society is absent, or I should enclose his receipt for Mr. Jamieson's donation. Be so kind as to tender him the thanks of the Missionary Society for his liberality. As soon as the Annual Sermon, which was preached by Dr. Livingston, appears, I will forward you a copy. In the mean time accept Mr. Kicherer's account of his mission to the Hottentots. You will read it with interest; as you will the last report of the Directors of the London Missionary Society, which I send with it.

Through the continuance of that mercy which has followed me all my life long, in the midst of multiplied offences, and which I hope will never forsake me, my family are spared and healthy. Some uneasiness has been excited in the congregation by questions raised about the settlement of a second minister. All things, I trust, will shortly revert to their wonted tranquillity—a blessing with which our churches have been eminently favoured. But it is good for us to have practical proofs that societies can no more dispense with the counsels of our Lord, than individuals can. Mr. Laurie can furnish you with more particulars. My soul rejoices in his acceptableness and prosperity. May God, who alone giveth the increase, furnish and own him! It is my present intention, if nothing in Providence forbid, to be refreshed with a visit to Washington before I return home from the General Synod. I am not sanguine; for I have found that it is not wise to set our hearts upon *personal* gratifications. Disappointments are lucid comments upon the excellence of the life of faith.

Ever yours,

J. M. MASON.

CHAPTER XIV.

1804.

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

Plan Reported—Chosen Professor—His various and heavy Duties—Consultation—Doctorate.

THE principal business of the Associate Reformed Synod this year related to measures for establishing their Theological Seminary. It will be recollected, that at a previous meeting Mr. Mason, with another minister, had been appointed a "Committee to prepare the draught of a plan" for such Seminary. The report of this committee was now presented, and is too important a document to be here omitted. It is as follows:—

The committee appointed to prepare the draught of a plan for the Seminary proposed to be erected by the Associate Reformed Church, beg leave to report to the General Synod:—

That, in their judgment, nothing ever attempted by this church required more caution, zeal, and firmness, than the erection of a Seminary which is to form and to fix the character of her future ministry. The Lord Jesus has charged his church to see that her ministers be not only "faithful," but "able" men—that they be "apt to teach"—"well instructed in the kingdom of heaven"—workmen who need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"—"wise stewards to give the household their portion of meat in due season"—qualified to "confirm the souls of the disciples"—to "convince gainsayers"—to "stop the mouths of unruly and vain talkers"—to "reprove, to rebuke, to exhort, with all long-suffering, and doctrine, and authority." While the radical principle of their ministry is that "precious faith" by which they have "received Christ Jesus the Lord" as their righteousness and strength for their personal salvation; and while the efficient cause of all their success is the power of that Holy Spirit who alone giveth the increase, even to the planting of Paul, or the watering of Apollos, it is indispensable, if we would not tempt the Lord, that much pains be taken, in the use of ordinary means, for cultivating the talents of youth, and for storing their minds with those valuable materials which the Divine blessing may sanctify to the edification of the church; materials which few men can rightly estimate *before* entering into the ministry, and the want of which no thinking man *after* entering upon it, does not deplore till his latest hour.

The committee, therefore, are not to inform the Synod what various researches, what combined lights, what discriminating habits, what acquaintance with the enemies of truth, what facility of repelling their attacks, are necessary to the minister who hopes to "show himself approved unto God," as one alike prepared to give "milk unto babes," or "strong meat unto men," and who is "set for the defence of the Gospel!" Thus impressed, the committee cannot view but with grief and alarm, the relaxed state of education for the Christian ministry —the rapidity with which young men are hurried into this most awful of human functions—the barrenness too often visible in their ministrations—the consequent depression of the ministerial name—the usurpation of the ministerial office by vain and ignorant zealots, and a long train of evils which may, in a great measure, be traced directly or indirectly to the want of suitable *preparation.*

It is the solemn conviction of your Committee, *that all efforts to build up the Church of God, to extend intelligent piety, or to arrest the course of error and delusion, which do not embrace, as their principal means, a well-appointed ministry, are unavailing and chimerical;* and they trust that the Synod will feel it their *duty* to seize the opportunity put in their power, at the erection of a Theological Seminary, to make a stand against desolating fashion, and draw the line of ministerial qualification as near as possible to the landmarks which were held sacred by the Church in the best days of her purity and glory. With difficulty arising from perverted habit, from local situation, from internal embarrassment, and other causes, the Synod must expect to conflict. But they who do not aim at great things, shall accomplish only little things. The object is worth the struggle; *ultimate* success among the fairest probabilities; and if we should fail after due exertion, we cannot lose by the experiment; we shall fail with the approbation of our consciences and our God.

The Committee are of opinion that the system of education should be so constructed as to admit of an easy subdivison among different teachers, when the condition of the seminary shall afford more than one; and, at the same time be not impracticable in the hands of a single Professor. How far they have carried their idea into execution the Synod will determine.

After satisfaction given with respect to personal godliness, which can in no case be waved as *preliminary* to the study of divinity, the first inquiry is into *natural talents.* For as God does not call every pious man to serve him in the Gospel of his Son, so mere piety, without a suitable portion of good sense, will never answer the Apostle's requisition, "Apt to teach." The Committee, therefore, recommend that Presbyteries, before accepting any one as a student of divinity, prescribe to him some literary exercise, which may enable them to judge whether his natural endowments be such as to justify their encouraging him. This condition cannot be thought hard; because no youth who has passed with tolerable proficiency through a course of liberal education can be an entire stranger to the use of his pen. With this attention to *talent* must be coupled an attention to prudence; as nothing is more hurtful to the Church's peace, nor more conducive to irritation and schism, than the imprudence of her ministers. They are to be "wise as serpents, and harmless as doves;" and obedience to this precept will reject every applicant who is known to be habitually imprudent or litigious. The principle, too little regarded, that the *Bible itself is to be the great system of study, and, what is commonly called systematic divinity a mere auxiliary*, the Committee have adopted as fundamental in their plan. They accordingly propose that the term of professional instruction in the Seminary be *five years*, and that the session continue in each year seven or eight months successively; that is to say, from the first of October or November in each year till the first of May or June in the succeeding year. These five years to be divided into two periods; the first containing *two* years and second *three*. The course of study to proceed as follows:—

1. Every student to begin and close the day with the exercises of secret devotion; uniting to prayer the reading of a portion of God's word, and of some book of impressive practical religion, and using the advice of the Professor in his selection. In this exercise he is to read the Scriptures not as a *critic*, but as a *Christian;* as a *saved sinner*, who knows no other way of peace but that which belongs to him in common with the weakest and meanest of God's redeemed; and who lives by faith, for daily counsel, and strength and consolation, upon that Saviour whom he is afterwards to preach to others for their pardon and hope. Experience has long affixed her seal to this truth, that the constant application of the mind to divine things, *as subjects of disquisition and elucidation*, tends to wear out their lively influence on the conscience and affections. This effect of *studious* habit must be counteracted by a *gracious* habit of reading the Divine Scriptures, and such books as breathe most of their temper, in an humble, reverential, teachable frame; under a peculiar recognition of the presence of God, and with fervent supplications for his free spirit. The student, therefore, must on no consideration permit his mind, during this employment, to indulge in speculative excursions; constantly remembering that one of his hardest tasks will be to resist the approaches of carnality, and that a carnal minister is the most detestable object in the house of God.

2. Such a portion of the earlier part of every day is to be devoted to the *study of the Scriptures in the original tongues, and of that classical literature which facilitates this study*, as, by a faithful improvement of time, may enable the student, in the latter period of his course, and especially at the expiration of it, to read the originals with tolerable ease. The hours devoted to this employment should be most at *first*, and every year abridged to make room for subsequent studies. Recitations to the Professor should be so frequent, as to keep up and stimulate the spirited prosecution of this branch of study. The older students may, with profit to themselves, assist the Professor, as their

other engagements shall render expedient. By regularity and patience in this exercise; the student will perform with ease what he at first thought impossible; and will find himself, on leaving the Seminary, in possession of some of the best parts of Grecian and Roman literature, with which no biblical critic can dispense, and of the power to derive his truths from the fountains themselves. He must be taught from the beginning, that it is degrading and unsafe for a minister of Christ to be incapable of resorting to the original, which are the authentic Scriptures—that the knowledge of the originals is worth more to him than all versions, with all comments—that without it he cannot vindicate well, *in all points*, the doctrines which he advances; cannot rescue either his hearers or himself from the embarrassments created by erroneous versions; cannot judge between clashing translations; nor, relying, as he must, on the representations of others, be the living expositor of God's Word to his flock; but, at best, an *interpreter of intrepretations.*

3. To the critical study of the original languages must succeed *the regular reading of the Holy Scriptures in our common version*, and in such portion as shall finish the whole during the first period of two years. This must occupy the remainder of the morning. The student is carefully to note those passages which produce, at the time, a particular impression on his mind, and very briefly to minute the impression, whether of a doctrinal, controversial, or practical kind. He is also to note difficulties, and labour to *resolve them for himself.* Having failed in this, he may repair to some of the more general commentators in the library, and converse with his fellow-students; and if the difficulties still remain, he is to give it, precisely stated, to the Professor, who shall, within one week, but not on the same day, explain it, if he think proper, before the students collectively; and all such explanations as he may select, it shall be their duty to minute very briefly, without delay, when they are dismissed. To ensure greater effect from this mode of reading the Scriptures, he shall put into their hands the most succinct and general treatises on Scriptural subjects of peculiar moment, *as they occur;* and, at stated periods, shall call them to account on these subjects. Their books of notes shall at all times be produced to the Professor on demand.

4. Having completed the first reading of the Scriptures in the first two years, the student shall commence a *second course of the same nature* at the commencement of his third year, dividing it in such a manner as to finish the second reading at the expiration of his last year: spending three years upon it. He is now *to consult the originals, step by step*, as he goes along; to note valuable criticisms; to have his course of Biblical reading extended, by the direction of the Professor, and conducted exactly as in the first period; only on such particulars as the Professor shall point out, he shall write essays not to exceed a given number of pages. All his proofs in the fifth year must be referable to the original Scriptures.

Steady adherence to the foregoing plan of Scriptural study, will bring to the student's view, and familiarize to his mind every great subject of ministerial attention. He will be insensibly introduced to the range of dogmatic, polemic, and practical theology; will be stocked with materials for every occasion; will be, what is of more consequence to him than any other acquirement, and what he can hardly hope to be without it—*at home in the Bible.* He will also have formed, for future studies, habits frugal of time, and abundant in fruit.

5. The use of *systematic theology* being not so much to inform the mind, as to *methodize materials of thought previously collected*, the study of it shall not formally commence till the fourth year. As a basis for it, the student is accurately to commit to memory the whole text of the Confession of Faith and Larger Catechism. A facility of stating the truth with clearness and connexion, which will be greatly promoted by this exercise, paves the way for those reasonings by which it is to be illustrated and supported. Here the Professor shall direct the students to the proper books on each subject, being particularly vigilant in causing them to read and digest under his own eye, such as can be comprised within the time allotted, and may give them acquaintance with the *substance* of the system. He is also to *lecture* upon the several primary topics of the system, following the general order of the Confession of Faith. It may be proper for him to require from the students, after they have read what has been prescribed to them, a short dissertation upon the principal doctrines as they come in course; in preparing which dis-

sertation they are to use no other helps than their Bible, their own reflections, and each other's conversation. If their number should render the production of an essay from every one inconvenient to the Professor, he may class them by two or three, and receive the essay from them jointly; but in this case they shall be alternately the penmen of their respective classes. After examining these essays, the Professor is to finish the dogmatical part by a lecture of his own to all the students of the fourth and fifth years; and is immediately to follow it with a summary of the leading objections of adversaries; to demand a written solution of them upon the plan of the essays; and to close the subject with presenting it to his pupils in such a form as shall rectify their mistakes, supply their defects, and put them in possession of an answer both concise and full.

It is evident that these exercises cannot be restricted to equal measures of time; some particulars requiring more discussion and research than others. For the same reason the Professor's lectures cannot be tied down to any stipulated days. This must be entrusted to his diligence and discretion. But he must not fail to complete his course within the two years. This rule is essential, and nothing should induce a relaxation. To bring the duty which it prescribes within his reach, he is never to forget that his business is *not so much to think for the students as to assist them in thinking for themselves.* The whole of his lectures must be accommodated to this principle; and, therefore, they are not to run into expatiation, nor to descend to minute illustration, but, in general, to state propositions and arguments in such a manner that the student, having a clear perception of them, may be set upon a train of elucidation for himself.

From the foregoing regulations must be excepted *critical lectures*, which the Professor should deliver at stated times, not on any *book* of Scripture, unless occasionally to exhibit a specimen of general analysis, but on passages of difficult interpretation, or momentous controversy. In these lectures no authority is to be admitted but that of the *originals;* and every student is to have the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures before him, and is to turn up to the texts cited by the Professor. The critical lecture is to embrace not merely the philology of the context, but its connexion, scope, and argument; and is designed to form in the student the rudiments of a sound expositor.

6. Every student shall prepare, in his fourth year, two of those discourses commonly called *lectures*, and two popular sermons; and in his fifth year three of each, neither to exceed *half an hour* when deliberately read or spoken—a day to be assigned as often as the number of students shall render necessary, for the delivery of discourses; and the Professor strictly to watch their *manner*, that they may not acquire nor retain any vicious habits of enunciation or gesture.

7. The afternoons to be appropriated to miscellaneous reading, such as history, morality, geography, belles-lettres, &c., and the evenings to writing.

8. No student, when in health, to be out of his bed after eleven at night; nor in it, after five in the morning.

9. Intervals of study, exclusively of meals, to be sufficient for such manly recreation as may preserve the tone of the animal system, and prevent that lassitude, debility, and depression, which never fail to attack a life entirely sedentary, to create individual wretchedness, and mar public usefulness. This is considered of so much importance, that the Professor is to enjoin it as a duty upon the consciences of his students, and to treat and censure the omission of it, not only as an academical crime, but as a sin against God.

10. Students whose temporal circumstances can afford it, shall pay into the public fund, for the use of the Seminary, the annual sum of —— dollars.

11. The Seminary shall be annually visited by a commission of the General Synod, who shall keep records of their proceedings, and shall report to the Synod, at the meeting immediately following, the state of the Seminary; and such other things as they may judge necessary for its welfare; always consulting with the Professor on these points. The time of visitation shall also be the time of admitting students.

12. Students of other denominations may be admitted into the Seminary upon the same literary terms which are exacted from those of our own body, after being approved by the commission of the General Synod as to their personal piety; and

on the condition of paying into the fund, for the benefit of the institution, the annual sum of —— dollars.

13. Every student, on his admission, shall bind himself, in a written obligation, to strict obedience, to diligence, to peace, and not to propagate, directly nor indirectly, any opinion or tenet whatever, contrary to the known faith of the Associate Reformed Church.

14. In so far as relates to their enjoyment of sacramental privilege, all students shall be considered as subject to the discipline of that congregation with which they statedly worship.

15. If any student shall be habitually idle, or shall propagate any opinion or tenet contrary to the known faith of the Associate Reformed Church, as contained in her constitution; or shall foment dissensions or quarrels; or shall be refractory to his teacher; he shall be rebuked, or otherwise censured by the teacher or the congregational judicatory, and his conduct represented to the commission of the General Synod at their general visitation; the same commission to be invested with the sole power of expulsion from the Seminary. If any case of great emergency cannot, with safety to the institution, be postponed till the usual time of visitation, the Professor shall have authority to convene the commission.

16. Every Presbytery shall have a right to take cognizance of the improvement of their students, during the *recess* of the Seminary; but no Presbytery shall remove a student with a view of licensing him to preach, or for any other purpose, before the expiration of his regular course of study, without the special leave of the commission.

17. Minuter details to be reserved for adjustment when the Seminary shall actually commence.

All which is respectfully submitted.

JAMES SCRIMGEOUR, } *Committee.*
JOHN M. MASON, }

NEWBURGH, May 21st, 1804.

Though final action on this report was postponed, the important step of appointing a Professor for the institution was taken by the Synod. After mature deliberation and solemn prayer, the choice, with entire unanimity, fell upon Mr. Mason.

When Dr. Chalmers was appointed to a like station, he immediately resigned the duties of his pastoral charge. He did it as a matter of course, knowing full well that the burdens of both offices were too heavy for any one man; and the necessity of relinquishing the one for the other was conceded by the Christian community. The same necessity is felt with regard to the professorships of our present Seminaries: Andover, Princeton, New Brunswick, Auburn, New Haven, Windsor, &c. Each Seminary has several Professors; and each Professor is wholly devoted to a single department of study;—and his hands are full. But the circumstances of the case required that Mr. Mason should not only sustain alone every department of study in the Seminary, but that he should, at the same time, continue to sustain the labours of a most important city charge. He had no adequate means for the support and education of his family, without a salary. This he could receive only from his congregation. The small stipend which he received from the Synod barely covered the incidental expenses of his Professorship. The public funds were all needed for the support of dependent students. The denomination was not wealthy enough to furnish such foundations as are now common. It therefore became necessary for him to put forth the utmost personal efforts, in addition to all his other duties, for gathering means to defray current expenses, in behalf of those young men whom he was training for the ministry. A laborious correspondence was carried on by him for this purpose, running through a length of years. Not only with the churches of his own denomination, but with Christians of various names, at home and abroad, he put forth strenuous and persevering efforts for sustaining and promoting a cause which lay very near his heart, and to which he was disposed to consecrate every particle of strength or of influence which he could command. As we have already seen, his letters very often refer to this subject; and many of them are exclusively devoted to it.

The above plan for the Seminary was early printed and distributed among ministers in this country and in Britain, with a view to receive suggestions for the improvement of it before adoption. In a letter to a friend in Edinburgh, dated Aug. 4th, 1804, Mr. Mason writes: "Copies of a plan for the Seminary, printed with a view to obtain the best light on the subject, I must trouble you to have distributed according to direction. It is my particular wish to have the free and deliberate opinion of every intelligent person to whom I can have access, and suggestions of whatever may tend to improve our plan before it be definitively acted upon, which will be in May, 1805." In another letter to the same, he says; "I wish to obtain the opinions of judicious friends before next spring, as our system of theological education will then be finally settled. Our congregations multiply so fast, that no human hopes of meeting their demands can be founded upon anything but our Seminary. It is of immense moment and you will see that we are not idle. I would be glad if my private fortune were such as to render *salary* a matter of indifference to the support of my family. I should then disengage myself from a pastoral charge and devote myself exclusively to the Seminary; an object of much greater magnitude in itself, and more congenial with my habits of mind than the routine of congregational duty. But this is not within my reach, and I must submit to the toil of both."

About this time Mr. Mason was honoured with a Doctorate in Divinity by the University of Pennsylvania. His aged friend, the Rev. R. Annan comments on the event with pleasantry and wit, in a letter of June 15th, 1804.

CHAPTER XV.

1804.

DEATH OF HAMILTON.

Interview—Funeral Oration—Letter to a friend in Scotland—Letter from Judge Marshall—Letter from Mr. Jay—Letter from Rev. James Hall, Edinburgh—Poem of Mrs. Grant, of Laggan.

The Summer of 1804 was marked with a calamity which shook the continent almost like an earthquake: It was the fall of General Hamilton. No one was more deeply affected by this appalling event than Dr. Mason. He had a most solemn and tender interview with that great man after he was shot by Burr, the particulars of which were at the time communicated to the public through the columns of a respectable Journal, and have been preserved in a volume entitled "Coleman's Collection." Though published before, there are sufficient reasons for inserting them here:—

To the Editor of the Commercial Advertiser:

Sir: Having read, in your paper of the 16th, a very imperfect account of my conversation with General Hamilton, the day previous to his decease, I judge it my duty to lay the following narrative before the public:

On the morning of Wednesday, the 11th inst., shortly after the rumor of the General's injury had created an alarm in the city, a note from Dr. Post informed me that "he was extremely ill at Mr. William Bayard's, and expressed a particular desire to see me as soon as possible." I went immediately. The exchange of melancholy salutation, on entering the General's apartment, was succeeded by a silence which he broke by saying, that he had been anxious to see me, and have the sacrament administered to him; and that this was still his wish. I replied that "it gave me unutterable pain to receive from him any request to which I could not accede: that, in the present instance, a compliance was incompatible with all my obligations; as it is a principle in our churches never to administer the Lord's Supper privately to any person under any circumstances." He urged me no further. I then remarked to him, that, "the holy communion is an exhibition and pledge of the mercies which the Son of God has purchased; that the absence of the sign does not exclude from the mercies signified, which were accessible to him by faith in their gracious Author." "I am aware," said he, "of that. It is only as a sign that I wanted it." A short pause ensued. I resumed the discourse, by observing that "I had nothing to address to him in his affliction, but that same *gospel of the grace of God* which it is my office to preach to the most obscure and illiterate: that in the sight of God, all men are on a level, as *all have sinned and come short of his glory;* and that they must apply to him for pardon and life *as sinners*, whose only refuge is in his *grace reigning by righteousness through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" "I perceive it to be so," said he; "I am a sinner: I look to his mercy." I then adverted to "the infinite merit of the Redeemer, as the *propitiation for sin*, the sole ground of our acceptance with God; the sole channel of his favour to us; and cited the following passages of scripture: *There is no other name given under heaven among men, whereby we must be saved, but the name of Jesus. He is able to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.*" This last passage introduced the affair of the duel, on which I reminded the General, that he was not to be instructed as to its moral aspect, that *the precious blood of Christ* was as effectual and as necessary to wash away the transgression which had involved him in suffering, as any other transgression; and that he must there, and there alone, seek peace for his conscience, and a hope that should "*not make him ashamed.*" He assented, with strong emotion, to these representations, and declared his abhorrence of the whole transaction. "It was always," added he, "against my principles. I used every expedient to avoid the interview; but I have found, for some time past, that my life *must* be exposed to that man. I went to the field determined not to take *his* life." He repeated his disavowal of all intention to hurt Mr. Burr; the anguish of his mind in recollecting what had passed; and his humble hope of forgiveness from his God. I recurred to the topic of the divine compassions; the freedom of pardon in the Redeemer Jesus to perishing sinners. "That grace, my dear General, which brings salvation, is rich, rich"—"Yes," interrupted he, "it is *rich* grace." "And on that grace," continued I, "a sinner has the highest encouragement to repose his confidence, because it is tendered to him upon the surest foundation; the Scripture testifying that *we have redemption through the blood of Jesus, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace.*" Here the General, letting go my hand, which he had held from the moment I sat down at his bedside, clasped his hands together, and, looking up towards heaven, said, with emphasis, "I *have* a tender reliance on the mercy of the Almighty, through the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ." He replaced his hand in mine, and appearing somewhat spent, closed his eyes. A little after, he fastened them on me, and I proceeded. "The *simple* truths of the gospel, my dear Sir, which require no abstruse investigations, but faith in the veracity of God who cannot lie, are best suited to your present condition, and they are full of consolation." "I feel them to be so," replied he. I then repeated these texts of Scripture: *It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and of sinners the chief. I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.* "This," said he, "is my support. Pray for me." "Shall I pray with you?" "Yes." I prayed with him, and heard him whisper as I went along; which I supposed to be his concurrence with the petitions. At the conclusion he said, "Amen. God grant it."

Being about to part with him, I told him, "I had one request to make." He asked "what it was?" I answered, "that whatever might be the issue of his affliction, he would give his testimony against the practice of duelling." "I will," said he, "I have done it. If *that*," evidently anticipating the event, "if *that* be the issue, you will find it in writing. If it please God that I recover, I shall do it in a manner which will effectually put me out of its reach in future." I mentioned, once more, the importance of renouncing every other dependence for the eternal world, but the mercy of God in Christ Jesus; with a particular reference to the catastrophe of the morning. The General was affected, and said, "Let us not pursue the subject any further, it agitates me." He laid his hands upon his breast, with symptoms of uneasiness, which indicated an increased difficulty of speaking. I then took my leave. He pressed my hand affectionately, and desired to see me again at a proper interval. As I was retiring, he lifted up his hands in the attitude of prayer, and said feebly, "God be merciful to——." His voice sunk, so that I heard not the rest distinctly, but understood him to quote the words of the publican in the gospel, and to end the sentence with "me a sinner."

I saw him a second time on the morning of Thursday; but from his appearance, and what I had heard, supposing that he could not speak without severe effort, I had no conversation with him. I prayed for a moment at his bedside, in company with his overwhelmed family and friends; and for the rest, was one of the mourning spectators of his composure and dignity in suffering. His mind remained in its former state; and he viewed with calmness, his approaching dissolution. I left him between twelve and one, and at two, as the public know, he breathed his last.

I am Sir,
With much respect,
Your obedient servant,
J. M. MASON.

NEW YORK, July 18th, 1804.

On the 31st of the same month, he pronounced his "Oration commemorative of the late Major-General Alexander Hamilton, before the New York State Society of Cincinnati." This production is so well known that we need to repeat only its faithful and impressive close:

"My countrymen, the land is defiled with blood unrighteously shed. Its cry, disregarded on earth, has gone up to the throne of God; and this day does our punishment reveal our sin. It is time for us to awake. The voice of moral virtue, the voice of domestic alarm, the voice of the fatherless and widow, the voice of a nation's wrong, the voice of Hamilton's blood, the voice of impending judgment, calls for a remedy. At this hour, Heaven's high reproof is sounding from Maine to Georgia, and from the shores of the Atlantic to the banks of the Mississippi. If we refuse obedience, every drop of blood spilled in single combat will lie at our door, and will be recompensed when our cup is full. We have then our choice, either to remove iniquity, or prepare for desolation; and in the mean time, to make our nation, though infant in years, yet mature in vice, the scorn and the abhorrence of civilized man!

"Fathers, friends, countrymen! the dying breath of Hamilton recommended to you the Christian's hope. His single testimony outweighs all the cavils of the sciolist, and all the jeers of the profane. Who will venture to pronounce a fable, that doctrine of *life and immortality* which his profound and irradiating mind embraced as the truth of God? When you are to die, you will find no source of peace but in the faith of Jesus. Cultivate for your present repose and your future consolation, what our departed friend declared to be the support of his expiring moments: 'A tender reliance upon the mercies of the Almighty, through the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

"Hamilton! we will cherish thy memory, we will embalm thy fame! Fare thee well, thou unparalleled man, farewell forever!"

Associated with General Hamilton by ties of intimate friendship, and almost transported with admiration for his talents and his character, he lamented his loss as an irreparable calamity. His feelings are expressed, not only in his oration, but in many of his private letters. To a correspondent in Scotland, under date of Aug. 11, 1804, he says: "News I have none but what the papers will have announced before this reaches you; melancholy, most melancholy news for America, the premature death of her greatest man, Major-General Hamilton. I say nothing too strong when I assure you, that, all things considered, the loss of Washington was light in comparison with this. His most stupendous talents which set him above rivalship, and his integrity with which intrigue had not the hardihood to tamper, held him up as the nation's hope, and as the terror of the unprincipled; but it marked him out, at the same time, as a victim to the disappointed and profligate ambition of Vice-President Burr. By the most insidious and cruel artifice he was entrapped, against his judgment, his conscience, and his efforts, in a duel with that desperate man, and mortally wounded. The catastrophe happened on the morning of the 11th, and he expired at 2 o'clock on the 12th ult. The shock and agony of the public mind has never been equalled. Burr went out determined to kill him; for he had been long qualifying himself to become a "*dead shot.*" Ingenuous Hamilton went out to be murdered; being as ignorant of the pistol as myself, and had resolved not to take the life of his antagonist even if it were in his power. The cry of lamentation and indignation assails Burr from every point of the compass; nor can he turn his eye any where, without reading his own infamy in the honours heaped upon the illustrious dead. The pamphlet which accompanies this, will show what part has fallen to myself."

In another letter he writes: "The greatest statesman in the western world, perhaps the greatest man of the age, has been cut off in the 48th year of his life by the murderous arm of Vice-President Burr. The death of Major-General Alexander Hamilton has created a waste in the sphere of intellect and probity, which a century will hardly fill up. He has left none like him; no second, no third, nobody to put us in mind of him. You can have no conception of such a man, unless you knew him. One burst of grief and indignation assails his murderer from every corner of the continent. Political enemies vie with friends in heaping honours upon his memory. But he is gone. The coroner's inquest have reported their verdict, *wilful murder* by Aaron Burr; yet from some peculiarities of local jurisdiction, it is doubtful whether he can be brought to punishment. The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice!"

The most respectful notices of Dr. Mason's eulogy on Hamilton appeared on both sides of the Atlantic.

The following two, considering their sources, are of more than common value:—

FROM CHIEF-JUSTICE MARSHALL TO DR. M.

RICHMOND, Nov. 4, 1804.

SIR: Accept my acknowledgments for the gratification derived from reading the oration you have been so obliging as to enclose me. I lament sincerely the loss of the great man whose character you have drawn so well. While I truly deplore his fate, I may be permitted to indulge a hope that it may have some tendency to cast odium on a practice which deserves every censure you have bestowed upon it.

You have mentioned two facts of which I had never heard. The one is the part he took in producing the commercial meeting at Baltimore which preceded the convention at Philadelphia. The other, which is, indeed, characteristic of General Hamilton, is his resignation of the emoluments his military services gave him a right to claim.

With great respect, I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

J. MARSHALL.

MR. JAY TO DR. M.

BEDFORD, Aug. 15, 1804.

DEAR SIR: I yesterday received the "Oration commemorative of the late Major-General A. Hamilton," which you was so obliging as to send me.

Considering the talents of the author, and the merits of the subject, it could not fail of being exceedingly interesting.

The public have indeed sustained a great loss; and they appear to me to be very sensible of it.

In a letter to you, who knew him so well, I forbear to enlarge on these topics; especially as the manner in which they are treated in the oration renders it unnecessary. That he died a Christian, is an important as well as a consoling circumstance.

If I should go to New York the ensuing autumn, as I purpose to do, I shall not omit that opportunity of seeing you; and should anything call you this way, let me request the favour of a visit. It will always give me pleasure to manifest the respect and esteem with which I am, Dear Sir,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN JAY.

A more elaborate acknowledgment came from Mrs. Grant, of Laggan, whose early residence among the Schuylers on the

Flats, above Albany, had prepared her to feel deeply on the melancholy subject. It came in a letter from the Rev. James Hall, of Edinburgh, under date of Dec. 7, 1804. He wrote thus: "I enclose, addressed to you, a Poem from my friend, and your warm admirer, Mrs. Grant. It is a tribute of respect to the memory of the dear departed Hamilton, and of gratitude to you for that noble effusion of eloquence, of patriotism, and of friendship, by which, in your Funeral Oration, you endeavour to do justice to his talents and his virtues. Not only has America, but the world, sustained an incalculable loss in the removal of such a man from that stage on which he might have been expected long to act a conspicuous part. I return you my thanks for the copy with which you have favoured me. Everybody here praises its contents."

In addition to those gleams of poetic beauty and noble sentiment which appear in these verses, every reader will be agreeably surprised by the unexpected, but natural allusion to the author's acquaintance with Mrs. Hamilton, when

"————in early childhood's careless days,
On Hudson's banks we traced the sportive maze."

Nor will any further explanation be needed by such as have read the "Memoirs of an American Lady." We give the beginning and the close of this effusion :—

ADDRESS TO DR. MASON ON READING HIS ORATION ON THE DEATH OF GENERAL HAMILTON.

From Scotia's heath-clad hills and winding vales,
Where health and freedom sport on gelid gales,
Where nature's music cheered the pastoral plains,
And mountains echoed Ossian's lofty strains,
From whose deep glens, like boreal lights, break forth
Unconquer'd valour, and unequal'd worth,—
Accept, O Mason, from a muse unknown,
The meed of praise peculiarly thy own ;
When to th' illustrious dead thy lips dispense
The tribute pure of matchless eloquence. . . . .
While weeping nations catch the solemn sound,
And pious sorrow bows in awe profound,
Deep in my heart I feel thy power confest,
And sad emotion heaves my labouring breast ;
In the strong painting of thy nervous strain,
Th' exalted patriot here lives again.

Again he thunders thro' the ranks of war,
Again his genius dignifies the bar;
Again his beams of radiant glory clear
Arise to light the western hemisphere,
Mild as the dewy morn of infant May,
Serene as evening Cynthia's cloudless ray;
Again the social hour he seems to cheer;
Again those ties that sweeten life, endear,
Amidst the filial tribe, delighted, move,
Or on his consort, smile superior love.

* * * * * * * * *

But ah! can fame or honour's balm impart
To heal the anguish of a widow'd heart?
Where does the plant of sovereign virtue grow,
Whose juice oblivious lulls unceasing woe?
For thee, Eliza,* sympathy in vain,
Would steep in tears her saddest, sweetest strain.
Tho' other hearts in hopeless sorrow pine,
Alas! what griefs can boast to equal thine?
Who, midst a grateful people's loud acclaim,
Mov'd in the brightness of thy consort's fame;
By him in honour and in safety stood,
Then, instant saw thy glory quench'd in blood!
What wondrous changes has thy fate display'd,
What strong vicissitudes of light and shade,
Since first in early childhood's careless days
On Hudson's banks we trac'd the sportive maze!
Alas, since there with thee in happier hours,
I decked my artless breast with native flowers,
What strong convulsions rend the labouring world!
Wide empires rent, and thrones in ruin hurl'd!
And ancient faith, and ancient laws o'erthrown,
And tottering States resounding misery's groan!
Here patriot chiefs o'er dying freedom mourn;
There private griefs the heart-felt sighs return;
Not all the woes that sadly thus combine,
E'er wak'd more wide, more general grief than thine.
No corpse was e'er with fairer flowers adorn'd,
More justly honour'd, or more deeply mourn'd;
Nor ere to deck a soul-exalting theme,
Did elocution pour so rich a stream.
Yet once again, much honoured Mason, rise,
While Scotia hears thy strain with kindling eyes;
And while she fondly cries, "This chief was mine,"
Oh, bid the laurel with the thistle twine.

---

* Elizabeth Schuyler, daughter of General Philip Schuyler, of Albany, and wife of General Hamilton.

Tell to what ancient race his blood he ow'd,
And from what land the generous current flow'd.
So shall his Island-kindred proudly boast,
What shining worth in Hamilton they lost.
So shall the unknown muse exulting tell,
'Twas Mason spoke that peerless worth so well,
That Scottish genius won unrivall'd praise,
And Scottish hands entwin'd the mournful bays.

WOODEND, 7th Nov., 1804.

The death of General Hamilton led to a variety of measures for the suppression of duelling; among others to the "Anti-Duelling Association of New York." In behalf of this association Dr. Mason was induced to prepare an address for general circulation, and thus aiding to correct the prevailing tone of public sentiment on the subject. Though much of its interest at the time sprung out of the occasion which called it forth, it embodies many considerations which can never lose their importance, and which must always be a great weight with the reflecting part of the community. A change of public sentiment on duelling, is an important element in the history of this State; and everything which may have contributed to this change, deserves notice. The impression of all such measures is first upon the serious and thoughtful; and from them it extends to a wider circle, till it pervades the whole community. The paper in question, however, is too long for insertion, and too condensed for abridgment. Its principle was a united pledge by the subscribers to withhold their suffrages for political stations from all persons concerned in duels, either as principals or seconds. This pledge was very extensively circulated and signed, and is supposed to have had great effect in forming a public sentiment on the subject. In this instance, at least, a public pledge was useful in strengthening resolution and combining influence.

CHAPTER XVI.

1804, From July.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Letter to the Rev. R. Kerr—Letter to Henry Thornton, Esq., London—Hints to a Young Minister—Letter to Mrs. Brown—Letter to the Rev. William Carey, Calcutta—Letter to Rev. Dr. Davidson, Edinburgh—Letter to Mrs. Dr. Varich—Letter to the Rev. James Laurie—Letter to the Rev. A. Calderhead—Letter to the Rev. R. Annan—Letter to Miss Ann Erskine, Edinburgh.

The labours and anxieties of Dr. Mason were far from being confined to a single locality. Of few could it be more truly said, as it had been said of another, that the care of all the churches came upon him. From the position which he occupied in his denomination, he surveyed a wide field, and felt an intense desire that no part of it should be neglected. With this view he did what he could to form the policy and measures of the judicatories on a comprehensive scale, and then to have their regulations and appointments strictly observed. Most thoroughly convinced that no efficiency could be expected without the rigid observance of rules, he could not but feel pained at any deviation from them. This was the basis of that zeal for church order which appears in the following communication. This communication, moreover, affords some insight into the history of the times, especially by showing us the state of remote churches, with the nature of their difficulties and discouragements:—

TO THE REV. ROBERT KERR.

New York, July 6th, 1804.

My Dear Brother: Enclosed you have the necessary extracts from the minutes of our Presbytery. I do not wonder that the countermanding the appointment of the Synod of New York in your case should excite some uneasiness in your mind;

as it deranges, of course, plans, to the execution of which your measures, for some time past, have been directed. Be assured, however, that your recent appointments by the general Synod proceeded from circumstances which left little or nothing to their discretion. No subject gave them so much trouble, or consumed so much of their time, as the distribution of the few unsettled ministers and probationers.

The statistical tables show that the Presbytery of Washington, having nine ministers, is less embarrassed than either the Presbytery of Monongahela, Kentucky, or those in the Carolinas. These last had superior claims; because their hands have been much weakened by the desertion of Messrs. McMillan and Dickson; because they have to bear the burden and heat of the day in resisting the demands of hostile prejudices which vex their congregations more than those of any other Presbytery; and because of the seven brethren who came in from Scotland they have obtained none. Washington, Philadelphia, Monongahela, New York, Kentucky, all have their share; while the discouraged and convulsed Presbyteries of the Carolinas have been passed by. Their wants were urgent, their remonstrances strong, and no possible expedient to accommodate them could be devised without a portion of your labours. Your intentions, so far as known, were stated, and no man but wished to have gratified you. It was understood in Synod that your destination is to Kentucky; nor was your transfer to the Carolinas designed as a substitute. You can make the tour, and if your present resolution remain, the brethren, I am persuaded, will oppose no unreasonable obstacle to its accomplishment. Your route will be through the interior, by which you will escape many of the unhealthy tracts. I I do not see in our brethren that sallowness which marks the inhabitants of the feverish districts. Particular directions, which I cannot furnish, await you at Greencastle; and your expense will be less than you imagine, as you will find stations for every week, or nearly so, among our own vacancies. The principle of fulfilling appointments, which is always and *essentially* important, acquires, in the present instance, so much additional force from your own situation and that of the

Carolinian Presbyteries, that I hope you will not think of neglecting it.

The large and respectful assemblies which have attended lately upon your ministrations, afford me much pleasure, and have not been, I trust, without consolation to your own soul. A life of close dependence upon the grace of our Lord Jesus, is the only safe and comfortable life. Dear brother Kerr, remember his words, his heart-reviving words, "I have prayed for thee," not that thy feet slip not, but that "thy *faith* fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen *thy brethren!*" Go, then, "in his name and strength, making mention of *his* righteousness, even of his *only*." And may his "peace which passeth all understanding, keep your heart and mind;" and may he water the seed which he honours you to sow, with his quickening blessing, that it may spring up and bring forth fruit, in some thirty, in some sixty, and in some an hundred fold. So prays your brother in the Lord, &c.

DR. M. TO MR. THORNTON, LONDON.

New York, July 25th, 1801

My Dear Sir: Your very acceptable present of the second volume of Mr. Gisborne's Sermons, lately received, converted into a duty the inclination I have long had to repeat by letter my sense of my obligations to your friendship when in London. Your many and important public and private occupations, created a doubt which is now removed, whether my correspondence might not be intrusive.

I shall ever account it one of the happiest circumstances of my life, that I had an opportunity of witnessing in the families of some of the opulent and honourable of the British nation, the beautiful simplicity of Christian character. Names may distinguish, and oceans divide; but it is most consolatory to know, and to see, that believers in Jesus of every name and every nation *drink into one spirit.* Delightful is their fellowship here, and triumphant the hope that their voices will one day be mingled without a discordant note, and without a jealous emotion. Perhaps the reasons will then be disclosed, in an ample and satisfactory manner, why all who love our Lord

Jesus Christ in sincerity, do not more perfectly coincide in their views of subordinate questions. In the mean time, we may rejoice that on the essential question, *What think ye of Christ?* they have but one opinion, and one feeling.

The Seminary which you honoured with your liberal patronage, has lately been instituted; and the charge, the weighty charge of directing it, been devolved upon myself. I shall not enter formally upon the new duties imposed by this appointment, for a year to come; as it is almost impossible to pass immediately from ordinary pastoral functions, to labours so different and so arduous, without danger of mismanagement. Arduous they certainly will be to me, as they are *added* to my parochial employments. They ought to fill up, exclusively, the time of the man who ventures upon them; but such an arrangement is impracticable in the state of our churches. They will have your sympathy, when I inform you that they would find it very difficult, at present, to support their establishment without the aid which a minister derives from his private charge: and that such is the demand for ministers, that not one who is at all competent to such a post, can be spared from his congregation; his connexion with them being the principal security for their contribution to the Seminary. Greater obstacles have been surmounted than those which remain. We owe to our British friends the ability of proceeding thus early with our design. Their munificence deeply affects us, and is repaid with the only repayment in our power, our gratitude and our prayers. When the effect of the institution shall be *felt*, there is reason to think that our wishes will be accomplished. Till we can appeal to the result, our progress will necessarily be slower, and the assistance of those who have the means and the disposition to promote the diffusion of saving truth, will be of singular service, and applied in a way which, we trust, will leave them no cause to regret their liberality.

That we do not intend to make the course of instruction in our Seminary superficial or trifling, will appear from the enclosed. It contains an outline of our plan, and is printed for the consideration of our ministers and others before the next meeting of our General Synod in May, 1805. Shall I ask the favour of your showing it to Mr. Scott, and such other evangelical ministers as may fall in your way, and will not think an hour mis-spent in suggesting anything towards its improvement?

You will do me the kindness to present my affectionate regards to Mrs. Thornton and family. I retain a strong impression of the attentions of Mr. Wilberforce, and Mr. Grant; and shall be happy to tell them so, if acceptable.

Through the Divine mercy, our city is hitherto free from dangerous fever. The weather is charming: health prevails, and we flatter ourselves with escape from our scourge. Would to God that we had grace to recognize his hand in sparing and punishing, and to return to Him, as we have deeply revolted from Him.

Accept, dear Sir, my best wishes for your welfare, and believe me to be, with unfeigned esteem, Your's, &c.

Some rules for ministers are delicately suggested in a few hints to one of those young brethren whom he hoped to receive from Scotland:—

TO THE REV. WILLIAM WILSON.

New York, Aug. 9, 1804.

My Dear William: Between a host of accusations for epistolary crimes, and a counter-host of vindications, I have no heart left for apologizing to you. And if I had, you would probably think the apology, the only one I *would* make, as inconvenient as I am sure the hint is necessary. In fact, it would be this, that I cannot afford to write to you oftener than once in two or three years, as I lose more time in studying your lingo, than in penning half-a-dozen letters. If you had been so considerate as to have sent me an *alphabet*, the evil would have been less. Seriously, my friend, you will hereafter discover it to be of more importance than you now perhaps imagine, to acquire a distinct handwriting. If you live, which our God grant, to advance far in life, you will experience much difficulty from a small and careless hand. Write larger, and more legibly. The advice is of the more weight because it is not original. It was a suggestion of my father, to whom, in the latter part of his life, his manuscripts had become useless.

Your friend, Mr. ———, who arrived in good health, and kept himself in good spirits, is labouring in a couple of vacancies, a few miles from Father S. He has stamina, I think, but libations to the graces are certainly not in the list of his offences. Dear William, why can you not use the rasp, the adze, or the broad-axe, to your clerical timber? Rely upon it, that excepting in remote places, uncouth and vulgar manners are no where less tolerable than in America. They are of infinite mischief to a minister of the gospel, who must content himself with occupying some obscure niche, if he be unqualified for associating with the more polished orders of society.

I am much affected when I look back on my visit to Britain. My heart was wrung with anguish at failing to obtain several of the youths whom I wished to accompany me, and who *ought to have been here.* Mr. Ellis declining America, and settling at Saltcoats! I often burn with impatience to disclose my private convictions; but the delicacy and responsibility of public character restrained my eagerness, and sealed my lips. O, William, William! Half-a-dozen of you threw away opportunities of eminence and usefulness, and comfort, which nothing but a miracle will put within your reach a second time! But, "Jacta est alea!" I must sigh and submit.

Your duties, my dear friend, are arduous, but your encouragement is high. Live closely and humbly by the faith of the Son of God for your own soul; let his precious grace breathe its fragrance through all your ministrations: be sober, be vigilant, be faithful, be *firm,* and all shall be well. You serve a master who will never abandon you in an extremity. Believe his promises so as to lay the load of your hope and of your ministry upon them, and he will be your refuge and strength, a very present help in the time of trouble. It is impudent mockery to demand the trust of others in a Saviour on whose merit and strength we have not ourselves adventured. You can obtain better counsel than mine; yet let me recommend to you the three following things, as comprising the substance of practical government: 1. Reasonableness. 2. Firmness. 3. Uniformity. Settle it in your mind that you must either govern or be governed. Magnify your office, as a ruler in the house of God. Give your people good cause to believe that you are able to instruct them

— that you will declare the truth; and will discharge your duty. Whenever they are fairly impressed with this opinion of you, you will find it not so hard to preserve order and peace and love as many suppose. Irregular, passionate, petulant opposition is no match for systematic principle, and must ultimately yield. At least it will be a very rare combination of circumstances that can produce the contrary effect. Be mild, bland, affectionate, condescending. Seize proper opportunities of conceding to honest weakness and respectful wish, points which do not touch consistency or principle; for mankind are more obliged by little than by great things. Give up nothing to impertinence; secure the understanding and conscience by the intrinsic rectitude of your measures; and your feet will not soon be moved. Especially, instil into your *youth* the proper doctrine of the order of the Redeemer's house. Be very select in additions to your Session, and let it be a sacred rule, that no language however provoking, nor any treatment however injurious, whether in or out of deliberative bodies, shall *ruffle your temper!* Watch it, control it, keep it your servant; and you are the conqueror. Excuse my officiousness. It is the officiousness of love.

Ever yours,

JOHN M. MASON.

A very feeling letter of sympathy to his sister was inserted in a former chapter. Another was drawn forth by one from Mrs. Brown herself, the first she had been able to write him since her bereavement. Though on the same subject, it is of too much interest to be omitted:—

TO MRS. M. BROWN.

NEW YORK, Aug. 28th, 1804.

Your letter, my beloved sister, arrived yesterday. Your affliction is our own. We mingle our tears with yours; and desire to lay our hand upon our mouths. God is a great God who giveth to unhallowed questionings no account of any of his matters: while he has been pleased to soothe the submissive heart, and to explain so much of his providence in his word of truth as may satisfy us that he "doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men." In taking away your sweet babe, he has taught you another lesson of the insufficiency of created comforts: graciously taught you, that "the fountain of living waters" can alone "satisfy the longing soul," and greatly do I joy, and heartily bless his name, that he has enabled you in some measure to bow to his will. O, my sister! these stubborn spirits of ours must be subdued; and precious, in the midst of grief, is that kindly acquiescence in the divine dispensations which sinks our choice in the choice of our Father who is in Heaven. Why should we complain? why indeed? We, who are not in the place where his mercy "is clean gone forever?" We, who have still a thousand comforts? We, who have, *in no case*, been "dealt with after our sins, nor rewarded according to our iniquities?" We, whom unwearied tenderness has followed, and watched, and fostered, through endless follies, through steady ingratitude? We, on whom the light of revelation beams, and whose ears are every hour saluted by the joyful sound? Ah, why should *we* complain? No, let us "sing of the mercies of the Lord forever." My sister, my beloved sister, affliction is often the handmaid of peace; when we languish under the rod, infinite condescension yields it ear. Nature must mourn, that we may flee from its weakness into the supporting grace of an almighty helper; and from the guilt which has caused its weakness, into his pardoning love. In the voice of rebuke, hear also the voice of compassion; "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." *There*, there *alone*, my sister, in the merit and grace of our Lord Jesus, is there relief for the agonizing conscience, and the bleeding heart. "Come," now, "and let us return to the Lord, for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up." Often have I been in heaviness on your account; my "desire and prayer to God for you" has been, not that you might be surrounded with earthly gratification, though his benignant hand has lavished this upon you; not that you might be caressed and honoured, and distinguished among our fellow-worms, but "that *you might be saved*." My bosom trembles with the hope that the time to favour you, even the set time, is come, when you shall pass under the rod into the bond of his covenant, and be safe forever. When you were about to leave us for Kentucky, I was led to pour out my supplications in your behalf: and again and again was that promise concerning the church of God impressed, very strongly impressed, on my mind concerning you, "I will lead her into the *wilderness, and there will I speak upon her heart.*" It is the word upon which I can hardly help thinking, he has caused me to trust. I have been looking for its accomplishment. And Oh that it may come! O, that his recent visitation may prove to have been among his destined means! How will my sister then acknowledge that "his judgments are right, and that in faithfulness he has afflicted her." Make, now, a solemn and unreserved surrender of yourself and your remaining little ones to the Lord your God. May his grace direct and strengthen you! that you may be able, in all your future trials, to say with confidence, "I *know* in whom I have believed, and that he is able to keep what I have committed unto him."

I need not assure you of our love to yourself, your dear husband, and your boys. Grace be with you all!

Ever your affectionate brother,

JNO. M. MASON.

A letter, though short, from Dr. Mason to the missionary William Carey, on an occasion which tenderly affected him, cannot be unacceptable to the friends of Missions:—

TO THE REV. WM. CAREY, CALCUTTA.

NEW YORK, Sept. 15, 1804.

MY DEAR SIR: Your refreshing letter of Nov. 9th, 1803, was received on the 20th of April last by my friend Mr. Smith, who, I hope, will hand you this. Your present of the Bengal Scriptures I shall keep as a memorial, not merely of Christian friendship, but of the victory of the cross over Satan's kingdom. I cannot repress the tear of thankfulness and joy, when I reflect that the light of the glorious Gospel has shined and is shining upon those miserable Pagans who were sitting in darkness and the shadow of death. It is an immense object gained towards their general conversion. The seed is sown, and the hands of hell cannot tear it up. Ministers may, by persecution, be offered up on the service and sacrifice of their faith; their blood may now, as formerly, seal their testimony to the truth, and the foe obtain a short-lived triumph; but it is not so easy to exterminate a widely-diffused edition of the

Scriptures. Blessings on the name of our Lord Jesus, who has put it into the hearts of his servants to attempt, and by his providence enabled them to execute this great work! And blessings on the heads of those servants to whom has belonged the honoured instrumentality! The sweetest of rewards which can flow from the consciousness of successful zeal in the best of causes, is now their privilege; their labour of love shall profit the future seed that "shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation;" and they shall praise Him for it, when they "declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born."

You have heard, doubtless, that a most encouraging impression has been made upon the Hottentots by the ministry of Mr. Kicherer. Our prospects are encouraging, too. Brother Holmes is a faithful, an acceptable, and, we trust, an useful missionary. The particulars you will learn from the sermon which accompanies this. One circumstance rather alarming is, a most culpable lukewarmness toward our wishes among professing Christians. Alas, it is still a well-founded complaint, "All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." The men who hung back at first and put us off with, "Let us see you *do* something and our aid shall not be wanting," evince now, after we have been enabled to do much, that their first coldness did not proceed from a conviction that our enterprise was chimerical, but from their love of pelf and their disinclination to part with it. Pray for us, dear Sir, that a spirit of slumber may not be poured out upon us. Your brethren in this city are well. Though far off, and unknown by face, your person and exertions are dear to many among us; and to none more unfeignedly than to your

Affectionate friend and brother,

JNO. M. MASON.

One of his esteemed correspondents in Scotland was the Rev. Dr. Davidson of Edinburgh. As a specimen of the style in which they interchanged thoughts with each other respecting the Seminary, and the aspect of public affairs, we give the following letter:—

TO DR. DAVIDSON.

New York, Oct. 4, 1804.

I am sensible, my dear Sir, that the state of my correspondence with friends to whom I cannot repay my obligations, and from whom nothing can alienate my affections, wears an ungracious appearance. On my return home I was so involved in various business as to render a prompt and regular attention to correspondents altogether impracticable. When I could revert to it, I found my engagements had grown to such an extent as to demand for letters alone much more time than could possibly be spared; and I was under the necessity of *sorting* my friends, as it were, and addressing them successively. Reasons of immediate business, and others, very different from fickleness or whim, compelled me to begin with some whose acquaintance I had enjoyed the least. I must not, I confess, refuse its share of merit to one of my besetting infirmities, procrastination. Upon the whole, I have levied, *a la Française*, the heaviest assessments upon the patience and attachments of some from whom I have received the greatest kindness.

You will naturally inquire about our Seminary which has been honoured by your patronage. It is prosecuted as vigorously as the state of things will permit. It is difficult, without being on the spot, to form a correct idea of the embarrassments which such institutions encounter at first. The condition of society here adds force to a vexatious principle strong enough everywhere, a reluctance to part with money even for objects confessedly of the highest moment. However, we have no reason to be dejected. After patient exertion, I trust we shall see our wishes crowned with a success that will call for gratitude. Our General Synod, at their meeting in May last, devolved upon my shoulders the burden of the Professorship. The responsibility is awful; and nothing but the conviction of duty not to be misunderstood, could have induced me to accept it as I have done, in addition to my ordinary pastoral functions. But there was no help for it. Whoever was chosen, must submit to the same hardship, as our finances are not yet equal to the maintenance of a separate establishment; especially since they must be charged to a considerable amount with the support of students. I dare hardly say I wish, because I should wish the Divine providence to be what it is not; but I would have been happy had the Lord seen fit to grant, that my temporal circumstances might permit me to devote myself, without regard to salary, and in an exclusive manner, to the *general* service of the churches. I think I am willing to labour to the utmost of my powers of mind and body in any vigorous system of education for our theological youth. Nothing lies so near my heart as the formation and success of such a system; and the direction of it, if I mistake not my own character, is much better suited to my intellectual and social habits, than the charge of a congregation. But we cannot have things all in our own way. Infinitely higher wisdom than our own fixes the bounds of our action as well as of our habitation. The printed paper which I herewith transmit, will place in your view the outlines of a plan laid before our Synod last spring, and ordered to be printed, that our ministers and other friends may have an opportunity of examining it before the ensuing Synod in May next, when some definitive measures will probably be adopted. Your unreserved opinion on this interesting subject I shall esteem a particular favour; and it is of importance that I obtain the criticisms of my friends before the month of May.

Many people suppose that we are on the eve of a war with Spain, in consequence of a dispute about the boundaries of Louisiana, and the compensation claimed for spoliations committed on our commerce by French vessels in Spanish ports. If we continue in peace, it will not be owing either to the wisdom or firmness of our *speculative* administration. I regard very little the prognostics of the politicians. The disorders of the world, pour contempt upon all calculations which are not directed by the word of God. What is to come, I know not, but from the complexion of the prophetical Scriptures, I am inclined to apprehend that the most likely is the worst.

With cordial respects to your dear family,

I am ever yours,

JNO. M. MASON.

The Christian reader cannot fail to admire the wisdom, piety, and secret charity, which unite with the sympathy of the following effusion to his mother's widowed sister on sustaining a severe loss:—

DR. M. TO MRS. V.

NEW YORK, Oct. 5, 1804.

MY DEAR AUNT: I hope the enclosed will answer your purpose. My anxieties mingle with yours on every subject involving the interest of your dear children. Many difficulties you have indeed to encounter. But be cautious of giving way to dejection. The less of the creature there is between us and the Creator the more easy is it to feel our absolute dependence; that is, the shorter is our road to support and peace. Had he not wise and merciful reasons, he would not have thrown you into circumstances which are strongly marked with the cross, and compel you at times to institute painful comparisons, and to call up painful recollections. Flesh and blood are bad expositors of God's dispensations. He "is his own interpreter," and you will find in due season the interpretation to be as sweet as the text was bitter. Among those classes of the afflicted, to whom he has given "exceeding great and precious promises," the widow and fatherless occupy the first rank. You can have no cause for despondency so long as the "fountain of living waters" does not run dry. If you walk through a "vale of tears" you only tread in the footsteps of those who now "through faith and patience inherit the promises." The Lord's eye is on your path: say unto him with the weeping Psalmist, "Put my tears into thy bottle; are they not in thy book?" He has not—no he has not—cast you off. Too much goodness and mercy have hitherto followed you. At this moment he is bearing you up as upon eagle's wings. You can assign no reason why you have not fainted but this, that his mercy has held up your sliding feet. Trust him for "perfecting that which concerneth you," and trust him for your dear children. You have a high claim for them. "They are of the seed whom the Lord hath blessed." By methods of his own devising, he has fostered them hitherto: and this is a precious pledge of his future provision for them. It does us no hurt to be early inured to self-denial, and have a strong providential constraint laid upon the dangerous propensions of the youthful heart, especially when these are the very propensions which the corrupt state of society directly cherishes. "It is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth." You have cause of unutterable thankfulness that your affectionate and dutiful children have not broken your spirits by infant wickedness. They are in the best of hands, and your privilege is to leave them there. It is our Redeemer's gracious command, "Take no thought for to-morrow." To-day only is yours, to-morrow is *his*. You know not what a day may bring forth, in comfort or in grief. Every distracting imagination about to-morrow interrupts both the duties and consolations of to-day. Look upon the lilies, how they grow! Look upon the ravens, how they are preserved! Your heavenly Father feeds the fowls and clothes the grass; and shall he not much rather clothe thee and thine, O thou of little faith? "That," you will say, "is a charge which smites me down. My unbelief rules, and shuts me out from the repose which the compassions of Jesus tender to me in his Gospel." Unbelief is a great sin and a great folly, no doubt. It seals up in proportion to its prevalence, the streams of the water of life. But take heed, my beloved friend, that you do not grieve the good Spirit of God, by obstinately disowning what he has done for you. Thank him from your inmost soul that he has taught you to mourn over its sway, even though to your apprehension that sway be irresistible. Irresistible to your efforts it is; but not to the operation of the "spirit of faith." You are perhaps looking for the entire and unruffled dominion over this vile unbelief. If so, you are looking for what you have no right to expect in this life, because your God has not engaged to bestow it upon you. Remember that the plague of unbelief is a plague that will make you groan so long as you are "in this tabernacle." You are only learning by experience, what you profess to believe, that the Christian's life is a fight; and if you find it a hard one, it is to afford scope for your Saviour's "strength being made perfect in your weakness." In the mean time be assured that "there has no temptation (or trial) befallen you but such as is common." Your complaints are as old as the conflict between "the flesh and the spirit;" and this bears date with the first conversion in our fallen world. The Lord Jesus is "exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission." It ought to be our joy that "precious faith," to embrace pardon and strength as they are exhibited in Christ, is as much a free gift as the pardon itself. Put your unbelieving heart into the custody of the divine intercessor: and with it all your insensibility, and hardness and sloth, under this unbelief. "WAIT for him;" he is worth waiting for. In his own time, which is the best time, he will hear your voice; the hour of deliverance shall come, "and you shall yet praise him for the health of his countenance." My prayer for you is, that he would fulfil in you all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the *work of faith with power*. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." We all enjoy the mercy of good health.

One of those brethren who had accompanied him from Scotland, shared his tenderest sympathy, on an occasion when Christian sympathy becomes a balm to the wounded spirit:—

DR. M., TO THE REV. JAMES LAURIE.

NEW YORK, Dec. 8th, 1804.

MY DEAR BROTHER: I received yesterday, and read with much emotion, your letter of the 13th, concerning your recent affliction. Before a man of the world, my lips would be sealed; for I know not what source of consolation lies open to his heart. But, oh, my brother, Christian can talk with Christian concerning the chastenings of their Father, in a way as sweet to them as it is unintelligible to others. We are the Lord's; we have given our bodies, our souls, our dear little ones, again and again to Him, as His property; and we would not recall the gift for the highest bribe which can be offered by this seducing world. Would we, my brother? I know your answer. Well, He has taken you at your word. He is teaching you to pray after His own pattern, "Thy will be done." Lightly as most esteem what is commonly called the Lord's Prayer, there is not a man under heaven, but one "renewed in the spirit of His mind," that can utter it with understanding and sincerity. Every sentence of it, though most divine, goes to the quick of flesh and blood. But grace can pour it out from the bottom of the heart, through sighs and anguish, through stammering lips, and streaming eyes. I trust you can say, or are endeavouring to say, with one who had much better instruction than the "infallible" church could have furnished; "There he lies, and with him one of the best of my earthly comforts, but if the moving of a straw would bring him back again, without the will of my Father in heaven, I would not be the mover of that straw for a thousand worlds." Blessed be our Redeemer's name, we do not "mourn as those that have no hope." This covenant standeth firm, "I will be *thy* God, and the God of thy *seed*." How this latter clause affects some, I cannot tell; but I never read it without melting; and I am sure it is soothing at this moment to the bleeding bosom of my friend. Thanks, thanks, endless thanks and praise to the Lord our Righteousness, for the encouragement believers have to conclude that their deceased babes are gone to be with Him! You would not, my brother, wish to have kept in this scene of guilt and sorrow, to be employed in cries and weeping, an infant voice that now sings Hallelujah! There is nothing, indeed, in our religion, to stifle the yearnings of nature, but much to control, to soften and sanctify them. "We *know* that *all* things work together for good to them that love God." We know that our Lord has too tender an affection for us, to subject us to one unnecessary pang; and there is one consideration of mighty efficacy in composing our spirits under the rod, "Though he were a SON, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." Dear brother Laurie, you have been called to take a step in company with your sympathizing Saviour. And oh, He is good company. It is worth going through tribulation for His presence, and through death itself for His unclouded vision. In the mean time he will teach us, and if it cannot be done without scourging, He will teach us by the scourge, that we are not so poor as to possess only a portion of which death can rob us. Our inheritance is beyond the reach of revolution or disaster. "The Lord is our portion," say our souls; and whoever dies, "the Lord lives, blessed be our Rock." When on this topic, we must not forget that afflictions are for prevention as well as cure; and it is impossible for you so much as to conjecture what dangers to your peace and usefulness are frustrated by this very dispensation, nor in what manner it may fit you for "comforting others with that consolation wherewith you yourself have been comforted of God." Sanctified affliction is a rich mercy.

I have not endured your trial exactly, but have not been without my own. When I was absent from my family, supplying vacancies, early in November, death came up into my windows, and with a warning of only five hours, snatched away my mother-in-law. I left her in more than common health, and never saw her more. The stroke was trying, particularly as the shock might have had terrible effects upon Mrs. Mason; but the Lord was gracious, and had mercy upon her, and upon me also.

Our city, mercifully exempted from pestilence, has this morning been smitten with fire. It broke out between three and four, and by seven was exhibited the melancholy spectacle of the blazing and smoking ruins of forty-one houses and stores. The loss is immense. The whole block immediately south of the Tontine Coffee-house, with the exception of three or four stores, lies in ashes. Some are insured; some are able to bear it; and some are utterly ruined. Our excellent friend Bethune, escaped by a hair's breadth. One of his stores was in imminent peril, and the other, (one of the three that were saved), was actually on fire at both ends. It is good to live by faith on God's promise for this world. A moment sweeps away the earnings of an industrious life; a moment opens a door of supply which our industry could not have procured. Such, I hope, your office of chaplain will prove. I desire to give thanks on your behalf for the mercies which have been mingled with your griefs. Farewell, my friend. Grace be with you. I close my letter under the influence of the joy which arises from believing that you will have much better comfort than any which can be ministered by him who is unfeignedly yours, &c.

His unceasing efforts in behalf of the Seminary, together with his habitual disregard of calumnies, are indicated in a letter to a clerical brother settled in the West:

DR. M. TO THE REV. A. CALDERHEAD.

New York, Oct. 2d, 1804.

The demands of your Presbytery are great. But it is comfortable when our difficulties arise from our Master's blessing. I dare say you will agree with me, that in a short time, every supply which our sister church in Britain can afford, will be insufficient. Our only human hope is in our own Seminary. There is no point for which we ought to labour more among our own people than the necessity of contributions for its support. These contributions are needed as much for the maintenance of young men while at their studies, at least such of them as have not means of maintaining themselves, as for any other purpose whatsoever. It would be well if congregations could be made to feel their interest in this matter; for it is certain that in proportion to the prosperity of the Seminary is their own security for comfortable settlement when they are vacant; and for replacing their present ministers, when the Lord shall please to remove them hence. I cannot but think that if the people at large were familiarized with the important objects for which their benefactions are solicited, they would soon acquire a habit of steady and honourable liberality; and as certainly, would this liberality return with ample increase, into their own bosoms. You, my respected friend, have much in your power. Your toils, your experience, and your zeal for serving the welfare of our churches, confer on you a right to speak in a manner which shall be heard, and that with effect. Patience, gentleness, and perseverance will do wonders. We have infallible authority for calculating, that many will grant to *importunity* what they will deny to duty; and the habit once established, the principal obstacle is surmounted. I pray you, and the brethren, as you love our Zion, never lose sight of this all-important object, the Seminary! Carrying it vigorously through, our prospects are flattering; neglecting it, our course to ruin is direct and short.

The progress of the revival, as it existed in your country; of J.'s apostacy, and McK.'s schism, is perfectly natural. The first, without a miracle to control it, could produce no salutary fruits; the second, must pine away in his iniquity, unless the head of the church has ceased to protect her discipline; and the third could not expect men to be faithful and peaceable with him, when he had been faithless and troublesome to others. In railing against me, these persons only betray their own petulance, and their ignorance of my disposition. A million of their slanders, uttered within my hearing, might disturb my muscles, or excite my pity; but not break my repose. In railing against the church, from which they have been disconnected for reasons the reverse of reputable to themselves, they do but "foam out their own shame." The best method of treating them is never to reply. Let the railing all be on one side, and it will destroy itself. The moment we assume the attitude of antagonists, we strengthen the cause which we design to overthrow. Then it ceases to seem what, if left to itself, it would show itself to be—the cause of pique and passion; and by embarking something like principle in the contest, transfers the censure of public opinion to ourselves. I mean that is the case in matters like those of J. and McK.

You see my paper is done. I fill up the last vacancy with my fervent prayers for your personal, domestic, and pastoral happiness.

I am, my dear Sir, yours sincerely, &c.

There is scarcely a single congregation of any denomination in which there is not a Deacon Johnson or a * * * * to annoy the pastor and disturb the people. Even Dr. Mason's was not an exception. Our best way, generally speaking, doubtless is never to mind the grumbler, while we continue in the diligent and conscientious discharge of every duty; yet few can be at a loss for an original to the picture somewhat strongly drawn in a letter to an old friend, whose ears had been regaled with the music of a fault-finding tongue:—

DR. M. TO THE REV. ROBERT ANNAN.

New York, Sept. 5th, 1804.

My Dear Sir: I know perfectly well from whom you have received intelligence of uneasiness in our congregations here. I ask no name; your account of his complaints carries internal evidence of their author. We have had trouble, and he has himself been the chief mischief-maker. Like the troubled sea which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt, he is incessantly meddling with some implement of disturbance. Were ten men like himself to be found in any one congregation, the wisdom of Solomon and the patience of Job would be unable to preserve peace. Though he constantly attends public worship with us, he has entirely withdrawn from our fellowship, not having joined with us in the Lord's Supper since my return from Britain; at least I think he has abstained so long. What he means by talking about my absence from my congregation, it is hard to tell. It is now within a few weeks of twelve years since I was appointed to supply this people immediately after my licensure; and the 18th of April next will complete as many since I was ordained to be their pastor, and, with one exception, when I was obliged to go to Albany on the affairs of my father's estate, I have never, unless upon the business of the church, or from ill-health, or the hand of the Lord upon our city, I have never been absent from them a single Sabbath. But the truth is, that he would rather let the churches go to destruction than that the congregation should be vacant at any time by my attendance upon judicatories. Through the blessing of our Master we are at peace, and not without prosperity, I trust, in the best sense. But this does not satisfy * * * * nor will anything satisfy him, no, not if he could manage the whole concerns of the church in his *own* way. Fretfulness, and cavil, and murmur, belong to the essence of his character. Nothing but death will cure him; and I do not incline to dispute that he has the root of the matter in him. But, like Soame Jennings, he is a Christian *sui generis*.

DR. M. TO MISS ANNE ERSKINE, EDINBURGH.

New York, Aug. 9th, 1804.

My Dear Miss Erskine: Your letter of the 29th March, with the sermons and portraits, arrived safely in the *Pitt*. The parcels for Boston have been forwarded by a safe conveyance, but I have not yet found a proper one for transmitting the portrait destined for Dr. Thatcher. You have probably heard that both he and Dr. Nesbit have been called away to join your venerable father in that world of delights where there is no need of letters or pictures to cherish friendship. It will be my care to see that the packages intended for them, go safely to their families. Mr. Hazard resides in Philadelphia, and opportunities from this place to that occur continually.

The good health of your excellent and respected mother gives me much pleasure. May the Lord her God, who is "the *living* God," and "who keepeth covenant and mercy to them that fear him," strengthen her declining years, and support her in all her tribulations with his "everlasting consolation, and a good hope through grace." I shall look with tender recollection upon the image of your dear departed parent, who was a father to me when I was a stranger in a strange land.

CHAPTER XVII.

1805.

THE CAUSE OF EDUCATION AND MISSIONS.

Letter to Gov. Tompkins—Columbia College—Petition in behalf of the N. Y. Missionary Society—Letter from R. K.—Southern Churches—Letter to Rev. George Sigismund Straské—Letter to Mr. Thornton—Letter to Mr. Hardcastle.

Dr. Mason's zeal for the interest of learning as a Trustee of Columbia College has already appeared. Other evidences of it will be brought to light in the exertions which from time to time he made in its behalf. To this effect is a letter to Governor Tompkins, at the time either a Senator or Judge.

TO THE HON. D. D. TOMPKINS.

New York, February 25, 1805.

Dear Sir: I offer no apology for troubling you with these lines, because I know you will desire none. As an alumnus of Columbia College, your own interest in the affairs of our Alma Mater will sufficiently vindicate the interest which I feel in them at present, and which prompts me to address every one who can be of service to them, and will not refuse his ear to my feeble representations. Several things indicate that the Legislature inclines to munificence in the patronage of letters; and no man can estimate more correctly than yourself, the importance of seizing those favourable opportunities, those *mollia tempora fandi*, which such an inclination affords, for the purpose of producing both a just and a powerful impression. Union College appears to be the reigning favourite; and there is certainly no good reason why she should not enjoy her full share of the public bounty. But on the other hand, there is as little reason why she should monopolize it; and the Institution in this city be left to languish. I am apprehensive that the measures now pursued, not without prospect of success, lean strongly that way. With our course of education you are familiar; nor can it have passed your observation that several steps have been taken towards rendering that course progressively efficient. There exists in the Board of Trustees a purpose the most decided and steady, to impart a tone to its order and stamp a value upon its honours, which shall give a spring to juvenile effort, and command the respect of strangers. Embarrassments there certainly are in the way of this improvement; but if they be not removed, their continuance shall not be owing to supineness or fickleness. The Legislature may erect without difficulty, by fulfilling the expectations which its own acts authorized, a movement of wisdom and patriotism, which it shall afterwards view with self-approbation. I am persuaded that not one member of that honourable body will review the manner in which it has permitted, and even compelled, the arrangements of the College to vibrate between uncertainties, without conceding that there is cause for remonstrance, if not complaint. Seriously, my dear Sir, the State owes to its own dignity, I had nearly said to its good faith, such further provision for the College as will enable the trustees to meet its reasonable expense, and to complete the building which was begun by the direction of the Legislature, and cannot be completed without their aid. You need not be told that the present state of both the old and new buildings are a reproach to our city and State. If you will take the pains of perusing a petition from the board to the Legislature, and which was transmitted some time ago, to his Excellency the Governor, you will see that the college has suffered extremely by losses incurred partly during the Revolutionary war, but principally by the sacrifice which was made of its property by the State of New York, in her settlement with Vermont. 110,000 acres of land, with undisputed title, were surrendered by the former. At this day it would have been worth more than half a million of dollars; yet not an atom of compensation has ever been offered. I am the more urgent, as I have heard that it is actually in contemplation to give the *government house and property in this city* to Schenectady college!! The report, you may well conceive, stung me to the quick. The impolicy of such a measure, the exterminating blow which it aims at the college here, and the affront which it involves to all the feeling and spirit of our citizens, are so glaring, that nothing but the fact will humble me so far as to persuade me that it is possible. If the Legislature is disposed to grant that property for literary uses, its obvious appropriation is to the Seminary in New York. Nothing more would be necessary. I rely upon you, dear Sir, for your exertions on this interesting subject. You know much better than I what representations are likely to succeed, and in what manner the opinions of upright, but uninformed men are to be conciliated, that there may be no *risk* when the fate of our college is to be decided by a vote of the Legislature. Excuse my officiousness, and believe me to be, with great respect,

Your obedient humble servant,
J. M. MASON.

His views respecting the designs and operations of the Missionary Society of New York, are indicated by the following petition :—

To the Honourable, the Legislature of the State of New York, in Senate and Assembly convened ; the Memorial and Petition of the New York Missionary Society

Humbly sheweth,—

That a number of the citizens of New York, ministers of the Gospel and others, commiserating the deplorable condition of our Indian neighbours, and desirous of extending to them the blessings of Christianity, did, in the month of November, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety-six, form themselves into a Society by the name and style of " The New York Missionary Society," for the sole purpose of spreading the knowledge of the Gospel of the grace of God particularly among the American Indians ; that in this their design, they have been countenanced by the liberality of individuals and Christian Societies ; so that they have been enabled to institute a permanent mission, and to erect schools among the Indians on the north-western frontier of this State.

Your memorialists further show, that they are highly encouraged to persevere in maintaining the present mission, and to attempt others whenever it shall be in their power, as they have ascertained that very salutary effects have already resulted from the divine blessing upon their endeavours. They are happy and thankful that they can state to your honourable body, that the Tuscaroras, in an especial manner, discover an anxiety to embrace the Christian truth and the arts and habits of civilized life; that they have discontinued the use of spirituous liquors; have adopted the Christian Sabbath; send numbers of their youth to school, of whom many are making respectable proficiency in the rudiments of education; and that they generally attend public worship on the Lord's day.

Your memorialists further show that the prospect of access to some of the interior tribes is such as to warrant a hope that they, too, will favourably receive a suitable missionary, if he can be obtained. But your memorialists find themselves embarrassed in the prosecution of their plan by their incapacity of holding real estate; or of recovering personal estate which pious benefactors may incline to bestow. With a view, therefore, to the better accomplishment of the ends which the society contemplates, and which they are persuaded will meet the approbation of your honourable body, your memorialists pray that the aforesaid association may be incorporated by an act of the Legislature.

And your petitioners shall ever pray.

Signed in the name and by the order of The New York Missionary Society, this sixth day of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and five.

J. M. MASON, SECRETARY.

NEW YORK, March 6, 1805.

The following extracts from a letter owe their chief interest to the information they give concerning Scotch churches in the South:—

R. K. TO DR. MASON.

LAWRENCE, March 7, 1805.

MY DEAR SIR: For several weeks I have been deliberating whether to write to you or not. You will easily believe that the hesitation did not arise from any sentiment inconsistent with the warmest love and boundless gratitude. As no man alive owes you more, allow me to say that no man alive loves you better.

From the statistical tables, and from the information of southern brethren when at Synod, you must be almost as well acquainted with the state of our churches in this part of the country as I am; and, I believe, few events of importance have recently occurred.

I have seen Mr. Irvine, who is almost universally viewed as a very pious man. But I am not without apprehensions that even his piety may cause trouble, if not mischief. He talks loudly about giving up fast-days, &c.; and wonders that many are so soon removed from him that called them into the grace of Christ unto another Gospel! He entered a little into controversy, but without any good effect. You know how fruitful one is in resources to maintain the ground once assumed and publicly declared. Finding a convert was not to be expected, I endeavoured to press the idea that division would be destruction to our congregations, of which many were unsettled and weak. He hoped there was no fear of division by his means; but observed that peace could be purchased at too high a price; and that truth and old useful institutions must not be sacrificed at its altar. I find he has been misinformed. He thinks there are but two or three members of the Synod of your sentiments. And perhaps it was on this principle he proposed that the Synod should explicitly declare what was right in this controversy, and recommend moderation towards those who were wrong.

From some experience, I am persuaded that the uneasiness of the people, at least, as to its height and duration, is the effect of ministerial influence, still exerted within the Associate Reformed Synod; and that a little of the apostle's guileful prudence, if seasonably exercised, would soon have reconciled them to the alteration. When at Louisville I put your "Letters" into many of their hands who were most prejudiced. They returned them, not only without any answer in their mouth, but declaring there was more in it than they expected to find. By the most urgent solicitations, I was prevailed upon to leave it among them. Ministers have certainly discouraged reading upon the subject. To me it appeared proper that you should be acquainted with these facts.

R. K.

Many other letters, which sufficiently explain themselves, some of which relate to public and others to private matters, but all indicative of his thoughts, feelings, purposes and plans, will hereafter be introduced, for the most part in the order of their respective dates, without preface or comment, and sometimes without the signature.

DR. M. TO THE REV. GEORGE SIGISMUND STRASKE.

New York, March 9, 1805.

Very Dear Brother in Christ: Your letter to me verified Solomon's proverb, "As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country." I found, in perusing it, that the hearts of "all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity," beat in delightful unison. I knew of one more pilgrim on the way to the New Jerusalem than I had known before, and I "rejoiced for the consolation." On the great things which relate to our eternal life, to our conflict with the "law in our members warring against the law of our mind," to our *expectations* from God our Redeemer, and God our Sanctifier, I am in the habit of unbosoming myself in my correspondence to those who I think can enter into my feelings and views. I would not, for the world, give up Christian sympathy. It refreshes us in our course, to hear from and converse with those who labour under the same burden of the "body of death;" who are held, step by step, in the same gracious hand; struggling on from hour to hour amidst many fears, and many fightings, and many sins; treading on the very edge of a precipice, and still kept from falling. Adored be our Brother in the sanctuary above that he has a fellow-feeling with our infirmities; that we can lay our aching heads upon his bosom, and "pour out our hearts before Him."

The Directors of the New York Missionary Society received with much affection your offer of pious Missionaries. They have charged me to assure you of their Christian love, and their gratitude for your tender of assistance, but at the same time to inform you and their brethren with you, that Missionaries who do not speak the English will be of no use in their service. It is extremely difficult to get even tolerable intepreters for the English and Indian, and the difficulty would be greatly increased by the introduction of a third language. Neither is it in their power, at present, to set up new missions of any sort, although a wide door is opened; their pecuniary resources being hardly sufficient for their existing establishment. This, which is fixed among the Tuscaroras, on the Western frontier of the State of New York, in the vicinity of Niagara, prospers. We have ground to hope that the Lord has borne testimony to the Word of his grace. Wonderful alterations have been effected in the manners of these poor Pagans. They drink no more spirituous liquors; they have no more heathen festivals; they send their children to our schools which are erected among them; they observe the Lord's day; they soberly attend His worship; they have begun to adopt regular marriage; some of them appear to be deeply concerned about the things which belong to their peace, and to have just views, in general, of the Gospel salvation. These things are encouraging, and we wish to persevere. The Lord will work, and who shall let it? May we be found faithful! "I commend you," my dear Sir, to God, and to the Word of his grace. May He lift upon you the "light of His countenance!" You shall hear from me again after the meeting of our Society in April.

DR. M. TO H. THORNTON, Esq., LONDON.

NEW YORK, March 8th, 1805.

DEAR SIR: The second volume of the Christian Observer came to hand after long detention. I have to thank you for it; it is one of those "tokens for good" which should fix our resolution and elevate our hope, when men of wisdom and activity appear to be very jealous for the "Lord God of Hosts," and vindicate with firmness and dignity that "precious faith once delivered unto the saints." In matters of external order, it is the unhappiness of many, who burn with equal zeal for the "common salvation," to have different views. But it is highly consolatory to know that there are thousands whom the barriers of outward separation cannot deprive of most pleasant and affectionate communion with each other as heirs together "of the grace of life."

Our worthy friend, Mr. Mackanness, has received his copy of the Christian Observer. The old gentleman, weak in flesh, but strong in spirit, is waiting for his release from the body of death. A lovelier picture of Christian meekness, simplicity, and fervour, is rarely to be seen than is exhibited in his little family. Often as I have visited him, I do not recollect to have spent half an hour in his company without hearing introduced into the conversation the name of his patron and friend, your late venerable father, with much tenderness of feeling, toward the members of his family.

I shall have nothing to communicate relative to our Seminary, more than is contained in my former letter, till after the month of May. The interval is now too short to obtain the aid I requested for assisting in the original formation of our plan, but it will notwithstanding be useful and acceptable in furthering our progress.

It would have given me great pleasure to have assisted Mr. Stephen in his researches into the history of Toussaint, but my inquiries have been unsuccessful. Madame Toussaint is not, and has not been in this city, nor can I as yet get the smallest information of her residence.

The copies, which accompany this, of an oration delivered on the death of that wonderful man, Major-General Hamilton, and which derives its interest from that circumstance alone, are presented rather ungraciously at this late hour, but are not less a testimony of the esteem with which I am, your most obliged, &c.

DR. M. TO MR. HARDCASTLE, LONDON.

New York, March 12th, 1805.

My Dear Friend: Our winter has been more severe than at any former time in the memory of the oldest inhabitant. For three months the streets of this city have been covered with snow. The thermometer on the outside of my second story window has stood on the northern exposure as low as 5°

below zero for many days. Great calamities were endured in consequence of the fuel running short and all our creeks and rivers, from which the supply of wood came, being closed with ice. Liverpool coal commanded at one time £5 12s. sterling per chaldron. Repeated and heavy falls of snow, with short intervals of thaw and light rain, just sufficient to render the whole more compact, accumulated a mass of almost solid ice, in some streets three, in others four, and in some of the narrowest six or seven feet thick! Since the weather has moderated and for two or three weeks it has been quite pleasant; prodigious quantities have been carted away, after breaking up the ice with axes and crowbars. At this moment, the street, excepting the sidewalks, before my own door, is covered with a stratum of ice a foot and a half deep. In some spots it is still deeper and would not have gone off by the natural warmth of the spring sooner than May. But for the extraordinary efforts of the inhabitants, we might have the curious phenomenon of the whole surrounding country luxuriating with verdure, bloom, and fruit, the thermometer standing at 65°, and at the same time several sections of streets in the city of New York, with a population of 80,000 inhabitants, hard bound in ice. Centuries may elapse before such a winter recur.

I rejoice at the institution of the British and Foreign Bible Society. It is one of those events which mark very strongly the character of the present dispensations of Divine Providence. I am deeply impressed with the fear that darkness is about to settle down upon the churches, that with all revivals and all encouragements, the purity of truth and the power of godliness will decline through the church at large; *i. e.* she will lose more on the whole than she will gain in the parts; that the declension before long will be very rapid, and will proceed to a certain point, just far enough to keep alive a seed for the future harvest, and that the seed in the mean time will be sown throughout the heathen soil, and take root, and abide "till the spirit be poured out from on high." The preparations for bringing about such a state of things are so out of the usual course, and press so hard upon each other, that the Lord seems to be "hastening" his work and to indicate that there remains but a short period before he will "appear to men in his glory" and a much shorter time before the night come that is to precede the heavenly morning. Whatsoever then, the hands of his people find to do, let them do it *with all their might;* there is not an hour to spare. Your Bible Society may perhaps accomplish still more than your Missionary Society. It is in my view a sort of providential substitute for the latter, when it shall expire. Active and artful as are the infernals with whom we must conflict, they cannot easily elude or resist the slow but steady march of the Holy Scriptures. They have formerly tried the experiment, and found it much easier to kill missionaries than to banish Bibles. During the old persecution, Hell and its vicegerents, the Roman power, poured out the blood of the martyrs, but they were never able to extinguish the Scriptures. In spite of both, they remained, if I may thus apply the apostle's words, "living oracles." Every Bible is a missionary that preaches Jesus and the remission of sins, and the resurrection through faith in his blood. It can be easily concealed, cheaply supported, secretly consulted; it never grows old, superannuated, or sick, and where *one* Bible is preserved in a nation, *there* is a spark of celestial fire, which shall break forth into a flame to chase away darkness: *there* is the germ of a glorious church, which the "priest upon his throne" shall cherish and bring to maturity. But I am borne away. Put my name down for —— annually. Some subscribers may be possibly obtained. We have here, and you have in London, multiplied calls for charitable uses. I am sorry we do not bleed so freely as John Bull. Most of our wealthy people have apparently their portion in this life, and are very backward in furnishing means of access to a better. Our western mission is in a prosperous state; the gospel we find has taken hold of the Indians; but you will grieve to hear that our establishment is on the point of perishing for want of pecuniary means. One hundred pounds sterling in addition per annum to our little funds will completely maintain it. The Directors yesterday passed a resolution to request from the congregations of this city an annual collection. If it succeed, we shall be able to keep our ground; if not, to abandon the fairest prospect of evangelizing the Pagans ever offered to the American Christian, and to sit down mourning in disgrace.

Tell my brother Waugh he owes me two or three letters. I am afraid he is engaging in a secession less reputable than the secession *frae the Kirk O'Scotland*, even a secession from the honest community which pays its debts. He knows how to clear himself.

Can you tell me who wrote that stupid thing which is stuck before the volume yeleped "First Ripe Fruits," and which names itself a memoir of your humble servant? Verily, your London type-setters are saucy blades. If it will gain two or three dribbling half-crowns, they make no more difficulty of sporting with one's feelings than of trussing up a chicken. It was surely enough to cabbage the goods without caricaturing the owner.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1805.

THE SEMINARY.

Plan Adopted—Dr. Mason's Views—Address to the Churches—Remarks—Letters of Dr. Morse and Dr. Wilson.

At the meeting of the General Synod, held May, 1805, the plan submitted the year before was thoroughly discussed, and with some small amendments was finally adopted. A solemn Act was passed establishing the Seminary on this plan.

Its first principle was, that the Scriptures themselves should be the great subject of study; and that what is commonly called Systematic Theology, should be subordinate thereto.

The whole period of study should be four years.

A Board of Superintendents was constituted, whose duties were defined; and who were especially required to visit the Institution at least once each year, examine the students, keep regular minutes, and report to the Synod at each stated meeting.

Provision was to be made in whole or in part, for such students as could not command the necessary means of defraying their own expenses.

Further details need not here be given. The entire plan, it is evident, aims at a high standard of ministerial qualifications as it respects both piety and learning. Great stress is laid upon an intimate acquaintance with the Sacred Scriptures in their original languages, as well as in our vernacular version; and also upon such other branches of learning as may aid in illustrating and impressing them. The Bible itself, rather than any body of divinity, was intended to be the text-book of the institution. Dr. Mason had a deep conviction that divine truth, as contained in the volume of revelation, was the great instrument ordained from heaven for the conversion and salvation of fallen man; and that therefore its ministers must be skilled in drawing their instructions directly from that fountain. He by no means despised theological dissertations and systems, but yet felt a strong preference for the sacred volume as furnishing the preacher for his work. He wished the student to go directly to the Bible itself to learn what the Bible teaches. He wished him to use and cultivate his own faculties in the investigation and employment of the Scriptures themselves for securing the great objects of the ministry. He felt convinced that this method was essential for the due freshness and force of our evangelical preaching. "I wish," said he to his students, "I wish your minds to be, not like reservoirs filled with what is put into them; but like living and perennial fountains internally connected with the fathomless ocean of God's truth, and supplying themselves from it by their own action. *That which is filled by pumping in, will be emptied by pumping out.*" At the same time he considered it the best guard against those philosophical theories into which the learned classes have a propensity to wander. Probably he had an apprehension of rising tendencies, and with alarm anticipated such influences as have in the progress of this century spread from Germany over the greater part of Christendom. Whether he did or did not distinctly discern these things, it is certain, that his method of preparing young men for the ministry, as well as his own practice in the pulpit, was eminently calculated to counteract and prevent them. He felt not less anxious about the right kind of training for the rising ministry, than about an adequate supply of ministers. His plan was as remote from the fascinating speculations of the philosopher, as they were from the dry technicalities of the schools.

The earnestness with which he was intent upon the success of the Seminary, appears further from the appeal, which, with characteristic force, was, by order of the Synod, addressed to the churches under their care. This appeal, though of considerable length, cannot be well omitted:—

Christian Brethren: The printed minutes of the proceedings of the General Synod at their meeting in May last, will inform you, that, through the good hand of their God upon them, they have at length succeeded in establishing a theological seminary. This institution, the sole end of which is to prepare for the work of the ministry young men whose hearts God hath touched, will recommend itself to public-spirited Christians. A slight acquaintance with the situation of our country will convince them that there is a most lamentable want of men to "labour in word and doctrine;" especially of "workmen who need not to be ashamed." And it is most certain that not every pious and zealous man is fit to be a builder in the house of God. They who are to "instruct, must be instructed." They who are to "bring out of their treasury, things new and old," must have their treasury stored with old things and new. *The priest's lips should* KEEP KNOWLEDGE; *and they should seek the* LAW AT HIS MOUTH; *for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts.* It is not seemly that one invested with such a character, and called to such functions, should be "unskilful in the word of righteousness." If he be "mighty in the Scriptures," and prudent in his carriage; living under the power of those truths which he preaches to others; he will "commend himself to every man's conscience;" he will feed his flock "with knowledge and understanding;" and will reflect honour upon the Gospel. If, on the other hand, his attainments be slender; if, with the exception of some plain doctrinal passages, the Bible be to him a sealed book; if he is not able to remove ordinary scruples, nor to stop the mouths of gainsayers; if serious and sensible hearers do not obtain more satisfactory views of Divine things and the Divine word, *with* his aid than *without* it; he may enjoy a transient popularity; he may even become the leader of an impassioned multitude; but he will not "build up believers in their most holy faith;" he will not be surrounded by steady Christians, whose firmness may be counted upon in the hour of trial; nor, in the end, will he fail to bring contempt upon himself, and what is infinitely worse, a reproach upon the religion of Jesus Christ. None decry talents and learning in the ministry but those who, being destitute of both, "understand neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm." And if they assume to be teachers themselves, it is the interest of their vanity to prevent others from rising above their own level.

However such men rail against literature, be assured, brethren, that an ignorant ministry is a dreadful curse. You have only to inspect the nature of the case, and the history of past times, to perceive its mischievous tendency. Yet this is the very evil to which the age inclines. You recoil at the thought of its progress; and you ask, How shall it be arrested? We answer, that while the Lord alone can teach men to speak because they believe; and while he alone can thrust forth labourers who shall be ultimately successful, there are means within your own reach; means, the use of which you may lawfully connect with the hope of his blessing; and of which the *further* neglect will bring guilt upon your consciences, calamity upon your churches, and, it may be, ruin upon your children. The means to which we more particularly refer, is

Provision for the Instruction of your
FUTURE MINISTERS.

The Synod, thus far, have done their part. They have seized the earliest opportunity of founding a Seminary where youth may acquire much of that cultivation which is indispensable to a well-appointed ministry. Had their encouragement been greater, they would have adopted this measure sooner; and it is not *their* fault that the churches are not now rejoicing in its happy effects. But though they have encountered many embarrassments; though they have seen, with anguish, the backwardness of their people in supporting their efforts; yet they cherish strong hopes from the turn which matters have more recently taken. The liberality of Christians abroad which has furnished them with an excellent library; the reviving spirit which pervades some parts of their own body at home; and their harmony in digesting the plan of instruction, they would consider as presages that their "labour shall not be in vain in the Lord."

On perusing their "*Act relative to a Theological Seminary,*" you will observe that they aim at a more extensive and solid education for the ministry than has been usual in these States. They are sensible that their plan is at war with those loose and superficial habits which threaten the extirpation of all sound learning; that some will think the period of instruction too long —that others will suppose the extent of the country requires different seminaries—and that many will view the expense as an insuperable obstacle. All these things have been anticipated. The deliberations of the Synod were never more cautious than when occupied with the affairs of their Seminary. Difficulties were carefully surveyed; and, excepting a small division on a very few of the less important articles, you have, in their act, the expression of their unanimous voice.

1. Aware how criminal it is to trifle with those invaluable interests which are committed to the ministry of reconciliation, they resolved to inquire, not what is customary, but what is right; to make a stand against the inroads of destructive fashion; and to fix the education of their own youth upon a proper basis. Under such impressions they have appointed a course of studies which they *know* to be of the *first necessity;* and which, with the Lord's blessing, will repay the diligence of the student, and the patronage of the churches.

2. In the present relaxed state of preparation for the ministry, it is not unnatural that *four years* should appear to many an unreasonable length of time to be consumed in previous study. The answer is plain. Four years run rapidly by. Indolence or conceit may fret at the detention: but the modest youth who husbands his opportunities, will not find an hour to linger. Such as can form an estimate of Christian literature, will pronounce the period to be short enough. Such as cannot, and are therefore incompetent judges, should submit to the opinion of those who have made the trial; and have ascertained by sorrowful experience, how hard, often how impossible it is, *after* entering into the ministry, to complete those studies which ought to have been completed *before.*

"The wants of the churches" have no force in this argument; because it is infinitely better for them to wait a little longer, and be well supplied, than to be condemned to spiritual penury for a series of years, by the settlement of unqualified men: and because the delay will be felt only for a year or two *at first;* after which, if the Seminary be fed, there will be a regular succession of preachers.

3. The immense tract of country over which our congrega-

tions are scattered, and the hardships of travelling from the extremes, do certainly render it inconvenient to assemble our students in one place; and it may be asked, why steps were not taken to meet this difficulty in the beginning? Why several seminaries are not erected in such a manner as to consult our geographical positions? The questions are natural, and merit respectful notice. It may be replied, in general, that we cannot control circumstances, but are controlled by them. And a number of them have concurred to hinder, at present, the planting of more seminaries than one.

First.—It has been a work of nine years to plant *one;* and common prudence dictates that this one should be watered, and take root, and gather strength, before we think of more. The whole supply will be little enough for its nourishment; and if it be distributed among a number, none of them will have sufficient, and all will languish.

Second.—At the commencement of a new system of education, it is wise to have our attention and affections concentred; that the experiment may be fair, the plan perfected, and a model framed for future and subordinate institutions. Communities, like individuals, succeed best by doing *one thing at a time.* If different parts of a body which has not yet organised its strength, pursue at once different objects of the same kind, more toil and money will be expended, and less done to the purpose, than if the whole act together, and bring their united force to bear upon the several points of a common system, as their need shall direct, and their means permit.

Third.—A theological seminary without a library is good for nothing. Every one, therefore, must have its own library. To divide that which is already in the Synod's possession, would be to destroy it, and misapply the bounty of their benefactors. The books which would be most indispensable to other seminaries, are precisely those which can least be spared. And to furnish every seminary with a library for itself, would absorb a larger capital than can be raised; not to mention that a number of the most useful books are very scarce, and are not to be had in this country; and frequently not from Europe, even were there no want of money.

Fourth.—The advantage of several seminaries would hardly compensate as yet for the additional trouble and cost. The distance from each, though certainly less, would still be great to a large portion of the students; and the *real* benefit confined to a few. Perhaps, too, the disadvantages, in other particulars, might overbalance the advantage of local accommodation. After all, both good and evil are magnified in prospect; and it is neither impossible nor improbable that our difficulties will be less formidable in fact than they are in speculation.

Lastly.—*One* seminary is now adequate, and will be adequate for some time hereafter, to the whole number of our students. When it shall cease to be so, will be the proper season for projecting more.

4. The inexpediency of more seminaries than one being admitted, many will still suppose that the spot for that one has not been well selected. Cities are generally expensive; and New York is undeniably so at this moment. Young men, who could support themselves comfortably at home or in some more retired situation, will find their resources too scanty for New York; and many be deterred by that alone from the prosecution of their studies.

The difficulty is obvious; and is one of the most serious which we have to encounter. It is not, however, insurmountable; and there are considerations, which, when duly weighed, may reconcile the churches to the plan.

An effective seminary must be attended with expense, wherever it be fixed; and an expense greater than would be suspected by such as are not accustomed to the proper computations. The notion of an institution that shall cost nothing, or but a trifle, and shall yet educate, in a suitable manner, the rising ministry of a church, respectable for numbers and extending every day, is no better than a dream. Her friends, therefore, must either abandon the design altogether, and with it their own most precious interests; or they must incur expense, and devise methods of meeting it. There is no other alternative; and it would be folly to conceal or disguise the truth. In deciding on the *place*, their first inquiry is, *Where their object can be best obtained?*

If there be a choice of situations, they will of course compare the advantages and disadvantages of each, with a special reference to their finances. And after they have reviewed all those which would answer their purpose, they may discover that in a place where much would be saved on some accounts, much would be lost on others; but that the difference, *upon the whole*, is not so great as to justify the smallest risk of injuring their institution.

Reasons will suggest themselves to a reflecting mind for preferring a spot among the *older* settlements. The state of society is more matured, more stable, and therefore yields not only more convenience, but also a surer rule of calculation. Pecuniary and literary aid can more easily be had; and is less liable to interruption. Ordinances, ministers, judicatories, are more accessible. The students must be expected to bear some proportion to the population: and it is prudent to consult the comfort of the greatest possible number. But, to whatever district your seminary be assigned, you must select for its site a country place, or a village, or a large town or city. Without minutely examining their relative pretensions, it may be remarked:—

First.—That in either of the first two, it might be necessary to erect *buildings*, and to provide the whole support of the teacher, *neither of which are wanted at present.* Now the interest of the capital sunk in the one, with occasional repairs, and the revenue appropriated to the other, would be more than the excess of other expenses attached to a city establishment above those of an establishment in the country or a village.

Second.—That in the nature of things, an extra share of expense will fall upon that portion of the church which immediately encircles the Seminary; and therefore it ought to be set down in a place which will not be materially affected by such a circumstance. Were it endowed with ample funds, this argumentation would be superseded, but in its infant state is decisive; and, in conjunction with other things, will show that the Synod have not been ill-advised in pitching upon New York.

Such a place has advantages which are worth paying for. Choice of Christian society; all sorts of literary help; opportunities of seeing a variety of gifts and excellences in different stations; of studying the human character under a multitude of aspects, and with little trouble, &c.; all which are without price to an observant youth. Our people in New York have cherished the Seminary with peculiar affection. Their contribution, always liberal, amounted for the last year to more than double any former sum.* There is no prospect of its diminishing, but rather of its increase. The presence of the students will tend to keep alive this laudable zeal, and to attract the patronage of individuals whom God has distinguished with this world's good. Nor is it unlikely that a removal of the Seminary would be followed with a greater reduction of income than of expenditure.

Much being thus secured on the score of general utility, and nothing surrendered on that of economy, there can be no just ground of complaint against the existing arrangement; and it becomes the common concern to facilitate the operations of our long-wished-for Institution.

Let our friends and brethren correctly understand what is expected. The students must apply to their studies without distraction. Some of them will require no pecuniary assistance; some must be supported in part, and some altogether. That they may not "lose the things which they have wrought," the Synod must have it in their power to say to their youth, "Be under no anxiety for your maintenance; produce what you can, and if it be not enough, we will take care of the balance. Only be sober, be diligent, and repay in improvement what you receive in money." If this be not accomplished, past efforts and liberality are thrown away; and, humanly speaking, there is nothing now wanting to carry into effect a better system of preparation for the holy ministry than has been hitherto introduced into the United States, but a little exertion on the part of our churches; nothing but a decent regard to some of the strongest obligations which can bind the soul of a Christian. We beseech you, brethren, by the tender mercies of our God; by the value which you set upon His Gospel; by your sympathy with those who languish under a famine of His Word; by your regard for the spiritual welfare of your own children, when you shall have gone to give up your accounts; that you refuse not to encourage and assist the youth who step forward to consecrate themselves to the service of the Lord your Redeemer. They are your property; they are your hope. No man can tell what blessings he may be instrumental in bringing down upon himself, his family, his neighbourhood, his country, by fostering an institution from which are to issue future ambassadors of the cross. Such institutions were among the earliest cares of the primitive and reformed churches; and to their influence, under the sanction of the good Spirit of your God, do you owe the soundness of your faith; the purity of your worship; your religious light; that very ministry which you profess to revere and to love—nay, that Divine Scripture which is in your hands. Far from you be the base and ignoble principle which would whisper that "you have no more to do with those who dedicate themselves to the ministry, than with apprentices to any other employment, till they offer themselves, already prepared, for your approbation." He is a singular Christian who can persuade himself that the church of God, which has a charge over every baptized infant, has no concern in the rearing of those who are to dispense to her the Word of Life. And far from you be the principle, equally base and ignoble, which stops the ears and closes the hand whenever a pittance is asked for the most sacred use. A *little* from each of you will nurture a Seminary which, so far as human means can go, bids fair to adorn your pulpits with "burning and shining lights." Yours will be the consolation of compliance, and yours the guilt of neglect.

---

* The aggregate of contributions to the public fund, for the year ending May, 1805, is $1,380 ; and of this, $804 are from the City of New York.

You may say that "we cannot tell whether the young men whom we propose to educate for the ministry, will answer our expectations; that, after they have been trained up at our expense, they may desert our connexion, or betake themselves to other professions; and therefore, that it is profusion, and not charity, to lay out money upon such an experiment." Be it so! but for consistency's sake, let the same doctrine govern you in other things. Never put a plough into the ground, because you cannot tell whether your crop may not be blasted, and then you will lose your seed. Never send your son to school, because you cannot tell but he may abuse his knowledge to the breaking of your heart; and then it would have been better for him to be as ignorant as the beast he rides upon; and you will lose the expense of his tuition into the bargain. There is no one duty which such an objection cannot set aside. Means are ours; events are God's. And we have no more right to expect that he will provide our churches with ministers, if we omit the appropriate means of obtaining them, than that He will clothe our fields and replenish our garners, if, under pretext of trusting in His providence, we never handle a plough or a sickle!

If any one pretend, that in soliciting your beneficence to their public fund, the Synod have laid schemes for oppressing or incommoding you hereafter, he is either deceived or wicked. They have freely communicated their plans. Let facts interpret their motives. And when, on looking around, you behold every Presbytery under their inspection deriving benefit, directly or indirectly, from the application of their fund, pronounce for yourselves whether they have plotted your hurt, or sought your happiness. With boldness, therefore, they appeal to you *again*. Thrice have they, in their judicial capacity, laid before you, on this subject, their ardent wishes founded on your own wants. In their act concerning a Synodical fund, passed May 1796, and in their pastoral addresses of 1801 and 1802, their recommendations have been seconded by the voice of Presbyteries and ministers; yet it has been their mortification to witness a strange supineness in many of their congregations. Will you not permit them, brethren, to augur better things? Shall your name, year after year, be stigmatized with the reproach of withholding a trifle of your substance from a generous attempt to build up the church of your God? How does *such* a reluctance, in a matter involving both your honour and your privilege, consist with spiritual-mindedness, and "a treasure laid up in heaven?" How can you sit down under the shame of being less concerned for yourselves than are Christians at the distance of three thousand miles, whose munificence has enabled you to begin your Seminary with high advantage, and left to your public spirit the light and pleasant task of carrying it on? How can you reconcile it to your sense of justice, that a small portion of your brethren should lavish their property in bearing your burdens, while many of you, *more opulent than some who have set you an example*, not only decline bearing their burdens in turn, but even touching *your own* with one of your fingers? Had all acted thus—had all been eager to reap the profit of exertions not their own, what now had been our situation! Some congregations which are settled, would have been still vacant—some vacancies that were languishing, and beginning to flourish, would have been dispersed. In other places ministers would have been worn out in extra duties, and their charges deprived of labours which they now statedly enjoy. It is as clear as the light, that in so far as our public fund has been the instrument of our prosperity, those congregations and individuals who contribute not their quota, are really, though unintentionally, working for the common ruin. And if this same disposition continue, much more if it spread, the most sanguine will, at length, be discouraged, and the most patient grow weary. The fabric which we are striving to rear will crumble to pieces; the hope of a skilful ministry will vanish; and all the dismal consequences will lie at the door of those who withdrew their shoulders from the yoke.

If we use not flattering words, brethren, it is because we are deeply serious; and because we are well assured, that if your Seminary perish, there is no human expedient to save your churches from desolation. Here, then, is an object which entering into the essence of your social stability, prefers a claim upon your purse which you cannot innocently resist. In vain do you pray "that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed, and the kingdom of grace advanced," if you will *give nothing* toward the means to which the Lord has directed for that end. We repeat it, *a little* from each of you is enough. Who will grudge a few miserable shillings once a twelvemonth, in an affair of such magnitude? Who will be the poorer at the year's end? or venture to insinuate that the Son of God, whose is "the earth and the fulness thereof," will remain in his debt for such a donation? The duty is plain, the promise pointed:—"Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." Do not act, brethren, as if the word of your God were unworthy of your trust. Let it never be forgotten that He *will have a share* of our property; and if we defraud Him of our free-will offering, of the "first fruits of all our increase," He will wrest from our hands that abused wealth for which we do not make Him an acknowledgment *in kind.* Many a delinquency of this sort has been punished with a bad debt, or a bad crop: and no man ever gains by the commutation. The winds of heaven, the devouring insect, or a famishing drought, often takes away more at a blow, than would be demanded for sacred uses in twenty years. Come then, brethren, and let us join our tribute to the temple of God. Follow up with your public spirit the token for good which we already see. Gladden the hearts of those noble youth who are very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts; and who look to you as patrons and benefactors. *As the Lord hath prospered you*, is the rule. Let the rich man rise up with his gold; and let not the widow blush for her mite. The Lord will see, and will graciously reward: for "He loveth a cheerful giver." It is, moreover, a statute of His kingdom, that he which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he "which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully." Do you believe His truth? Let the proof appear in your next, and the succeeding annual returns. Not one of you will repent as having done *too much*, when he comes to the bed of death, and contrasts things carnal and temporal, with things spiritual and eternal. Refresh our bowels, brethren. And may the Lord himself "open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing till there be not room to receive it."

By order of the General Synod,

J. M. MASON,
A. PROUDFIT.

NEW YORK, 1805.

The institution thus established became generally known as Dr. Mason's Seminary. It originated with him as early as 1796, and from that day he never lost sight of it. He did far more than any other man to put it into operation and to sustain it. He was, in fact, until disabled by infirmity, its life and animating principle.

Nor is it claiming too much for this institution when it is regarded as taking the lead in a train of similar institutions in this country. It is true that Professors had been appointed by churches of various denominations at an earlier day; but they were isolated; they were without libraries; they were without sustaining and supervising boards; they proceeded without a regular and systematic course of operations under organized superintendencies, and without any provision for supporting such students as, however promising, had no adequate pecuniary means. It is true, too, that our oldest colleges—such as Harvard, Yale, Queen's (now Rutgers)—were founded with special reference to theological learning. At the same time it is true, that up to 1805, there was not in all the United States, any such institution as is now commonly understood by a Theological Seminary; especially one for the prosecution of what may be justly characterized as *Biblical* Studies. In all American Colleges, Theology had become altogether a secondary matter, even when not wholly merged in more general studies. And private teachers, though sometimes styled Professors, scarcely pretended to lift the covering from those rich treasures of the most useful knowledge which lie concealed under the Hebrew and Greek languages, oriental customs, and the antiquities of various nations. Such attention as is now paid to these and kindred subjects, in this country, cannot fairly be traced further back than the beginning of the present century. Our Seminaries have become preëminently characterized as institutions for studying theology *by investigating the Scriptures.* In this respect they have a claim to peculiar honour, and give promise of the grandest results.

The following extract of a letter from Dr. J. Morse to Dr. Mason, dated Charlestown, Mass., April 29, 1806, afforded the latter a gratifying allusion to what he was doing for theological education in New York, and to what might soon be expected in New England:—

"Yes, my dear sir, I have received a copy of your Synod's Act, establishing a Theological Seminary, for which I thank you. The plan meets my warm approbation. We contemplate one of a similar kind in this State. Since Harvard College has become revolutionized and brought under Unitarian influence, such an institution has become indispensable."

A few months later Dr. Morse writes again:—

"We seriously contemplate the establishment of a Theological Academy at Andover, on a plan similar to yours. I received a copy of the pamphlet containing the plan of yours, and published an abstract of it in the Panoplist of January last."

How many such institutions have sprung up since! and not one of them, we venture to say, without making Biblical research the most prominent feature. No other would at this day satisfy the public. Yet the precedence, in point of time, is claimed in some quarters for Andover!

The estimation in which the Seminary was afterwards held in the Reformed Presbyterian Church, appears sufficiently from the language of one of its leading ministers. In a letter dated Philadelphia, March 16, 1816, the Rev. Dr. James R. Willson uses this language: "The year that your Theological Seminary opened was a new era in the history of the American churches. I do not mean to flatter you, or any man. I know not to give flattering titles. But truth is truth. God made you an instrument in planting a tree which has yielded wholesome fruit among us. You set the example which others have followed. At this moment the Episcopal church is concentering its energies. Yes,. they are about to make a grand effort. The more light in the church the better."

CHAPTER XIX.

1805.

CLASSICAL EDUCATION, ETC.

Classical School—Letter to Joseph Nourse, Esq.—Letter to Mrs. Jane Kerr—Letter to Mrs. Joseph Thomson—Letter from the Rev. John Jefferson, Missionary.

Dr. Mason had great fondness for the classics of Grecian and Roman antiquity, and possessed a nice perception for their most exquisite beauties. Trained early to an intimate acquaintance with them, he continued ever afterwards to peruse them with delight. He viewed them also as among the very best instruments and means for promoting a thorough and finished education. In giving the mind the right sort of discipline at an early age, in imparting to it an ample command of language, in enriching it with beautiful imagery and every form of poetical conceptions, in imbuing it with refined taste and noble sentiments, he considered them almost indispensable. The following encomium from his pen may by some be thought extravagant: "With all who are qualified to form a judgment on the subject, there is but one opinion as to the importance of classical education. Experience has shown that with the study or neglect of the Greek and Latin languages, sound learning flourishes or declines. It is now too late for ignorance, indolence, eccentricity, or infidelity to dispute what has been ratified by the seal of ages. Whoever shall deny the superiority of the ancient classics as models of finished composition, of elevated sentiment, of all that belongs to disciplined mind, will forfeit his claim to the reputation of a scholar. But when it is considered that they contribute more than any other means to expand, to strengthen and to polish the youthful intellect; that they not only exemplify, but cherish the most refined literary taste; that they promote the power of patient, close and discriminating inquiry; that modern times cannot boast of a truly classical writer in his own language who was altogether unacquainted with them; and, what is of still more serious concern, that in the hands of such as know how to use them, they are of eminent service to the Christian religion, and to those invaluable social interests which depend upon it—zeal in their defence becomes a virtue, and efforts to extend the study of them a duty."

Such views, combining with his enterprising spirit, led him at different times into a variety of exertions for both raising the standard and enlarging the circle of classical studies. Among other things, about the year 1805, he took a very active part in establishing in New York a select grammar school, of a higher class than generally prevailed. He drew up a plan in minute detail for regulating the course of studies, for securing a thorough mode of instruction, for promoting correct habits, and for enforcing salutary discipline.

On this last point he remarks: "Penalties are to be so modified and applied as shall be found most effectual for cherishing good habits, and superseding corporal punishments.

"The corrections last mentioned are to be governed by the following principles, viz.:—

"1. They are to be proportioned to the offence; in estimating which not only the particular case is to be considered, but the general character and conduct. It is absurd, and destructive of the very end of correction, to chastise in the same manner a mistake and a crime. Slight imperfections in an exercise which do not manifestly proceed from willful and indulged sloth or obstinacy, are not objects of punishment. The most diligent and docile will err, and dullness is to be pitied and assisted.

"2. They are not to be inflicted without absolute necessity, and therefore as seldom as possible. Children should never be driven, but when they cannot be allured. Gentler means must fail before resorting to punishment. The lash applied incessantly and indiscriminately hardens youth against its effects, makes them hate and despise their teacher, and tempts them to plot against his peace and authority. It also ruins that more rational discipline which some parents endeavour to preserve in their families.

"3. They are never to be accompanied with *passion*. An ebullition of rage in the teacher, only excites revenge in the pupil. The offender is to be convinced of the evil of his offence before he suffers for it. The teacher's language, countenance, voice and conduct, must show the offender himself and all the rest, that he is corrected from a principle of love; and that it is with the greatest reluctance that his teacher chastises him; that he would not do it, could he in faithfulness omit it. To deepen the impression, it ought to be rendered as solemn as possible, and, in some cases at least, accompanied with prayer. This calm, rational and affectionate method will impart to discipline a dignity which will command the respect and awe of the scholars, will operate powerfully in the prevention of offences, and will consequently diminish the examples of severity."

Dr. Mason became one of the Directors of this school, and personally paid a great deal of attention to its interests. In such and other ways he practically contributed his amount of influence to the promotion of sound learning in the community —always viewing it as an helper to the cause in which he more directly laboured. How far the present state of classical education in New York may be connected with his example and efforts need not to be determined; but certain it is, that no progress has been made beyond the point which he early contemplated and sought.

To this school allusion is had in the following extract of a letter to his sister, Mrs. Brown: "My little folks shoot up rapidly, and my anxiety shoots up with them. Euphemia, who has been home half a year—as I could find no school which knew anything of *training the mind*—has lately passed into the care of a Miss Thomas, from England, who has good sense as well as accomplishment; who joins the lady with the mistress, and sweetens authority with gentleness. Both the girls are improving under her care. John and Abraham go to the Grammar School, which Dr. Abeel, Dr. S. Miller, Mr. McLeod and myself, have lately instituted in this city. We designed it as an experiment towards the melioration of our system of preliminary education, and it succeeds admirably. There is not a rude or idle boy in it. Two of us visit it monthly, and not only mark their progress, but their manners, and their cleanliness; and blame or praise, reward or disgrace, according to the evidence of a public ledger, on which every day's deportment and diligence is marked. J. came home this evening with large steps and glistening eyes, an elegant note of distinction being pendant from his neck for exemplary conduct.

In the same letter he alludes to the yellow fever of 1805, and gives a description of Newburgh, which will be readily recognised as accurate at the present time:

"Through the tender mercy of our God, my family was not only exempted from the epidemic, (though I had been in several infected parts of the city), but enjoyed unusual health. My lodgings were in the most delightful spot which the village of Newburgh affords; on the hill in the rear of the town and overlooking it, with a prospect of twenty miles upon the Hudson; terminating in view of cultivated acclivities twelve miles to the north, and in the commencement of the highlands and West Point, eight or nine to the south. In front of the house, the grounds are laid out in the form of hanging gardens; the greater part is clean sod, shaded by a variety of trees, and a pure, wholesome air circulating. This was the scene of my children's gambols; and they returned to the city with ruddy cheeks, vigorous limbs, and fine spirits.

"My congregation sustained no loss by the fever, excepting in the death of Thomas S. Arden, bookseller; who was the son of good old John Arden, and married a daughter of Mr. Givan, at New Rochelle. His premature death has deeply afflicted his widowed mother, to whom he was all that a mother could wish a son to be; and has extinguished pleasing hopes of his usefulness as an active Christian."

As repeatedly seen before, the sensibility of Dr. Mason's heart, always alive to the afflictions of his friends, often found utterance in communications like the following:—

TO JOSEPH NOURSE, Esq., WASHINGTON CITY.

New York, June 22, 1805.

My very Dear Friend: Not a day should have passed after the receipt of your kind and affecting letter, without my writing to you, had I not supposed that you would be absent from Washington before an answer could reach you. I did not recollect that dispatches would follow you without delay to any part of the country. That portion of your letter which relates to Maria, much moved and agitated me. Accustomed to be in your family as one of kindred blood, and having from the earliest moment of our acquaintance, felt a peculiar interest in your lovely daughter—an interest heightened by the circumstance of seeing her pass from childhood to maturity, and realize at every step some fair promise of her infancy, I learned with deep emotion the unfavourable state of her health. Subsequent inquiries make me afraid that your apprehensions are too well founded. I claim a tender share in your disappointment and your anguish. But, dear friend, sweet as are these earthly sympathies, they are not worth mentioning in comparison with the compassions of that high priest of our profession, who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. Blessed be his name; he has redeemed us to God by his blood, and has promised to furnish us with grace and mercy to help in time of need. He never told us, that the cup of suffering should pass away from us; but he has told us that we shall find it a cup of blessing. And what shall we say? Even what we have said a thousand times already:

"Lord, we are thine; but thou wilt prove
Our faith, our patience, and our love"

Here are we; let him do unto us as seemeth good in his sight. Dear friend, the point of resignation is to acquiesce in our Father's pleasure before the stroke come, and while the hope that it may be averted still flutters round our hearts. I have often observed to my people that nothing but the Lord's own grace can teach us to pray the Lord's prayer. I am sure that nature, reason, habit, will never enable you to look at your fading flower, and say, "Thy will be done!" But fellowship with that Saviour who set us the example when the cup of trembling was put to his lips for our sakes, will enable us to say it; will enable you to take your child by the hand, and give her up without stipulation to that Heavenly Father who allows you at the same moment to pour out your heart before him.

Adoration breathe forth in homage to his mercy, that she does not appear as a stranger to his grace. O! this sanctifies all. I add no more—as the affliction is my own—but that I shall endeavour to write shortly to Maria herself. The Lord comfort you and dear Mrs. Nourse, and the rest of your family, against grief on every side!

The decease of his esteemed brother in the Gospel, the Rev. Robert Kerr, called forth the expression of his sympathy with the widow:—

TO MRS. JANE KERR, SAVANNAH.

New York, July 8, 1805.

My dear Madam: The unwelcome tidings of the affliction wherewith the Lord has afflicted you, surprised us a few days ago. Could the sympathy of earthly friends remove your sorrows, you would have little occasion for tears. They can weep with you, but your aid and relief must descend from above. Your first duty is submission, absolute submission. It is the most High God who has smitten you; and though you may mourn, you may not murmur. "I was dumb," said a gracious sufferer, whose example is recorded for your imitation, "I opened not my mouth because *thou didst it.*" Often have you said, in repeating the Lord's prayer, Father, *thy will be done.* That will has taken effect in a point which touches all that is most tender in your tender heart. Present it, bleeding as it is, to his mercy seat. His name is, the Lord that *heals the broken-hearted.* There is nothing in his Gospel to stifle the yearnings of nature, but much to sooth and purify them. Nothing to rebuke the anguish of one who has been suddenly torn from the husband of her youth; but much to soften it, and to support her under it. Your affliction is great, it is singular; but it is mollified with many mercies, and while it bears, and cannot but bear, heavily upon you, you have reason to mingle praise with your griefs, and to pour forth blessing while you pour forth lamentation. Bless the name of the Lord, that you *do not mourn as one that has no hope;* that you have abundant cause to believe that your dear husband, though severed from you, has gone to *be with*

Christ, which is far better. This is so wonderful a mercy that every thing else is little, is nothing in comparison. Bless the Lord that the stroke did not fall upon you in some remote part of the country, where you and your orphan babe might have sunk under neglect or want. Bless him, that he has sustained you so kindly under the weight of your burden; and that he has directed the affections of so many around you to vie with each other in offices of love. Bless him, that you have a precious circle of relatives who, though absent in body, bear you on their spirits before his throne of grace. Their prayers are not vain; and their Lord is omnipresent. Bless him, that he has allowed you to enter a peculiar claim upon his protection: having declared himself to be, emphatically, *the father of the fatherless, and the husband of the widow.* Bless him, that though reason is appalled, and nature faints, yet his wisdom and power and grace can make all things, even this terrible thing, *work for your good.* We are short-sighted, and incapable of tracing the connexions of events. There are proofs enough in the word and providence of God, that those occurrences which we look upon as most disastrous, are really chief mercies. You cannot tell what mischiefs were before you, and have been avoided by the present calamity: what stratagems of the enemy have been defeated; what sources of consolation are about to be opened. Wait upon God in the way of his judgments. Though what he does you know not now, yet you may know hereafter; and be constrained most thankfully to confess, *I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that in* FAITHFULNESS thou hast afflicted me.

"Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan his work in vain;
God is *his own interpreter,*
And he can make it plain."

One benefit you may reap immediately from this visitation. You may feel how much, how infinitely preferable is the favour and fellowship of God, as your God reconciled in his dear Son, to all other comforts. When other friends are far off, he is near. When they cannot help, he is a refuge and strength, a VERY PRESENT help in trouble. Cast yourself and your unconscious little one upon his care. Cleave to him as your portion, and you shall find him to be a sanctuary. Say, in humble dependence upon the grace that is in Christ Jesus as the Lord your righteousness and strength, *Though I walk in trouble, thou wilt revive me.* Though he has chastened you sore, yet not having delivered you unto death, trust in him that you shall yet discover and declare his works, and testify to the praise of his glory, that it is *good for you that you have been afflicted.*

DR. M. TO MRS. JOSEPH THOMSON.

NEWBURGH, Oct. 9, 1805.

MY DEAR MADAM: When I last parted with you I could not flatter myself with the hope of seeing your excellent husband in much better health, but I did hope to see him frequently, and to converse with him on the best of all prospects which can present itself to the mind of a Christian, the prospect of entering into the joy of his Lord. As the accounts which I have heard of the rapid progress of his disorder, lead me to doubt whether this satisfaction shall not be denied me, I beg you to communicate to him, in the manner you shall judge most proper, the lively interest which I take in him, and his, and whatever concerns them. Your own heart has felt many a pang under the present dispensation of Providence, and is likely to feel more. But you are not alone. Many sympathizing friends share in your affliction; and it passes not without a sore pressure on the church of God. Yet, my dear friend, what shall we say? It is the Lord; let him do unto us as seemeth good in his sight. We trust that he hath redeemed our souls, and loved us with an everlasting love; and this shuts out all reason of complaint. Hear how he has taught us to argue under the rod: "He that spared not his OWN SON, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Your immediate duty is submission. "Father, not my will, but thine be done." Nature will yearn and expostulate, and who shall forbid her? Jesus himself wept, and has sanctified by his example the tears of his people. But yearning nature is not inconsistent with that grace which never stipulates. Resign your dear husband to that Saviour who has a better right to him than you have. "Father," said he, "I will that those whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." And if he is about to make this disposal of your husband, it does not become us to say, Nay. As to himself, we have cause to be assured, that he has nothing to fear. Therefore, "extol the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together." Were I near you, I would endeavour to talk to my friend of that precious blood which cleanses from all sin; of that hope in Christ which maketh not ashamed; of those exceeding great and precious promises which never failed a believing sinner; of that covenant which is ordered in all things and sure; of that inheritance which is incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. Tell him that Jesus Christ, the faithful and true witness, has said, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out;" "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Tell him that this our brother, who knows perfectly what it is to die, ever lives to make intercession for us; that he went down himself to the regions of death, in order to mark out and to show the path of life to his followers; that he has conquered in their name; has gone to the third heavens bearing on his shoulder the keys of hell and death; and is now known above, and known below, as "the Resurrection and the Life." My heart's desire and prayer to him is, that he may enable my dear friend to sing with his latest breath, "O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin the law; but thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" This honour have all his saints, to step from the bruised head of the old serpent, into the kingdom of light and glory; and to exchange their pilgrimage of faith and patience for accomplished promise and realized hope. I commend you both to the Lord, on whom you have believed; that you may find his grace sufficient for you, and his strength made perfect in your weakness. "The Lord fulfil all your petitions!"

TO REV. J. M. MASON, SECRETARY N. Y. MISS. SOCIETY.

OTAHEITE, Nov. 2 1805.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR: One of your country's vessels touching at this island a few days ago, and we having the pleasure of seeing some of the New York Missionary Magazines for the year 1802, thought that we could not do less, perceiving the harmony that subsists between your society and ours, of sending you a few friendly lines to inform you of the state of our mission here, and that we are pleased to find that our common Lord is carrying on his good work with such energy in America. Happy United States! where peace and religion seem to be diffusing their brightest beams while war is shaking other kingdoms and irreligion drawing down the judgments of a sin-avenging God. May peace continue to flow as a river through your land, and Christianity tread down infidelity as mire is trod down in the streets.

Respecting ourselves, we have almost everything to cause us to droop our heads and hang our arms as men in a desponding state. Though residing so long on Taheite, and though we have for some years been endeavouring to instruct the inhabitants in the truths of God; yet, with grief we must say it, we have not been able to succeed hitherto. Heathens we found them and heathens they remain, strongly wedded to their delusions, and despisers of instruction. But, notwithstanding these things, it must be owned the knowledge of evangelical truths is considerably spread abroad, and many have their understandings tolerably enlightened, though their hearts continue unrenewed. Yet, alas! what is this better than ointment without savour?

While war is with loud and piercing cries dispeopling other countries, sickness, infant murder and human sacrifices are silently but rapidly depopulating this once populous island. The judgments of God are abroad here as well as in Europe, though manifested in a different way; but, ah! the eyes, ears and hearts of those who for a moment escape the desolating stroke, are too fast closed to perceive the rod and Him that exercises it.

We have not had the happiness of hearing from our connexions in England for some years past, though we have had opportunities of transmitting sundry journals and letters to them. This renders our situation uncomfortable and multiplies our temporal wants, which we cannot supply from the few vessels that casually call here, but in an indifferent manner and to very great disadvantage. We should think ourselves highly honoured if we could have the pleasure of hearing from you, and be informed how the church of our Lord Jesus Christ is extending her borders through the States and among the Indians. If, sir, you shall judge it meet to favour us with a few lines and such magazines as can give us information on this important point, we think, if there is any communication between your country and the colony of New South Wales, that if they were sent thither to the care of the Rev. Mr. Marsden, or to Mr. Rowland Hassal, there is a probability of our getting them. The vessel by which we send this is the Taber, of Providence, Capt. Cornelius Sowle, who has treated us with much civility, and has also made the Society a present of some articles in the name of his owner, John Innis Clark, Esq., of Providence. The *Taber* is bound to China, and from thence, if Capt. S. does not himself proceed homewards, it will be forwarded to you.

We have the honour to remain

Your brethren in the Lord,

JOHN JEFFERSON, for the Society.

CHAPTER XX.

1806.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Letter to Rev. A. Wilson—Letter to Rev. A. Proudfit—Letter to Rev. J. McJimsey—Letter to Rev. S. Greathead, London—Letter to Mr. Hardcastle—Letter to Mr. Ebenezer Mason—Letter from Rev. John Youl, Missionary, Tahiti—Letter from Rev. W. Carey, Calcutta.

Not only was Dr. Mason burdened with the affairs of his own church, the Seminary, the Presbytery, the Synod, and various literary and benevolent societies, but he was often consulted by ministers, congregations and larger bodies at a distance. Reference is had to one of these cases in the following letter to the Pastor of the Associate Reformed Church at Albany:—

TO REV. A. WILSON.

New York, Jan. 16, 1806.

My Dear Brother: Your letter by Mr. McMurray gave me much concern. I had pleased myself with the hope that matters were in a train which could hardly fail to succeed in restoring the harmony of your congregation; and my hope, though enfeebled by your account of their state, is not yet destroyed. Men must have time to retread their false steps, and renew a friendly intercourse which has long been impaired. Truth will enlighten the understanding; ascertained sin will afflict the conscience; but to subdue and reverse *habits*, requires a struggle; and even with honest intentions can hardly be effected at once. There will be a swell after the storm is over, and it will subside at leisure. So far as I can judge from your letter, Mr. McGoffin's answer to the demand for his resignation, was prudent and temperate. If any persons who had embarked in the dispute, and had not signed the covenant of reconciliation, were elected elders, I think it was an error. According to the pacific terms proposed by the committee, who certainly did all that men could do toward preserving the congregation from ruin, ought to have been a *sine qua non*, in the nomination both of church officers and of trustees. If the objectors on account of Mr. McGoffin's continuance in office, were among the signers, it is evident, as I would without hesitation tell themselves, were I present, that they dissembled in the transaction, and were equally insincere with their brethren and their God. Howbeit, considering your situation, it is perhaps best for you to be reserved and delicate in your comments. If you can at all manage sessional business, I would not press the question about the other two elders any further. Let it sleep; a more favourable opportunity may occur for enlarging your Session. One of the points more immediately important is, to conduct your proceedings, record your minutes, file your papers, and enforce the general order of the church, with the most regular exactness. But by no means proceed Sessionally against any members who hold out in their refusal to sign the reconciliation, or in some unequivocal manner to declare their acquiescence in it. Prudence dictates that if any coercive measures be necessary on that score, they be directed by the Presbytery, and not by your Session. The former is, indeed, the legal course; for unless the Presbytery have brought their interference to a definitive close, it is a *res nondum indicata*, and you have nothing to do with it. In any view, your intermeddling with it as a Session, would instantly reorganize the broken parties, and rekindle the flame.

I am not able to comprehend the reasons of that obstinacy with which some insist on a mortgage on the church. They act as if there were no faith among men, and the church to which they belong had entered into a solemn conspiracy to cheat them. I cannot forbear crying, shame! The bond of the Trustees gives them security to the amount of the church property, unless they suppose that the board intend to rob them by a fraudulent disposal of it. And who is obliged to give them personal security for a corporate debt? After all, it might perhaps be best if the congregation would make an effort, and pay off that portion of their debt which is due to these captious creditors. Or, perhaps, those who think the corporate security sufficient, might be induced, for peace sake, to give the dissatisfied claimants personal security, and accept as the indemnification the bond of the Trustees. Anything is better than these scandalous contentions. And they who are willing to risk most for the restoration of harmony, and the credit of the Christian name, will have a better security than bonds and mortgages. Their troublers will gain nothing; and I should not be surprised if some occurrence in Providence smite away from their grasp that very property for which they have wrangled, the moment it becomes disconnected from the church. But let our friends be persuaded that it is better to give any security than permit their public property to be held in the names of individuals. If any one of them die, you may be tormented by his heirs for half a century.

One thing more, my dear brother, and I have done. A great deal depends upon yourself. Take no side; or if any of your conduct has leaned that way, labour by an equal affection and regard to efface its impressions. Let it be seen that national feeling enters not into your measures. Be particularly attentive to those who most suspect you, and have treated you the most rudely. Especially endeavour to repress, on this subject, your natural jocularity. You are not aware, I apprehend, of its influence. It does hurt. The state of feeling is too irritable to bear it. The evil is too serious to be joked away. Briefly, if the wound is to be healed at last, yourself, under God, must be the physician. I offer no apology for my plainness. You know how to estimate it, and will not dispute that it proves the love with which I am, my dear brother, yours affectionately,

J. M. MASON.

The following likewise brings into view somewhat the variety of his engagements.

TO REV. DR. A. PROUDFIT.

NEW YORK, Jan. 19th, 1806.

MY DEAR BROTHER: Yours of the 9th came to hand on Friday, after the mail had closed; and I have not been master of a moment to answer it, till this morning. I had written that day to Mr. Wilson, requesting him to inform you and brother J. Mairs immediately that I should be in Albany, God willing, at the opening of the Legislature, and wished to see the brethren of the Committee as soon as possible. I have made my arrangements accordingly, and design to set off on Wednesday morning next. Experience has proved that the earlier in the season, for private bills, the better.

I should joyfully spend a communion Sabbath in Salem; especially as I shall be absent from one of our "solemn feasts" in New York. But I am afraid to contract any engagement. I do not wish to be a day longer from my class than I can help. I have, besides, business to transact with the Legislature for Columbia College, and for the Missionary Society; and I know not whether my private affairs may not oblige me to go to Ballston; this may possibly be dispensed with. But I think that I shall find without it, full occupation in Albany for every hour of my stay. Yielding to necessity, therefore, I pray you not to reckon upon me, and I fear that this letter will not reach you in time to adapt your communion to the only Sabbath in which it would be practicable for me to be at Salem, were I otherwise at leisure; I mean the first in February. Such, at least, is my present expectation.

My family have had their share of sickness for some time past, but, through the tender mercies of our God, are returning to health. Our best wishes are for your happiness. Peace be within your walls, domestic and ecclesiastical.

Yours, truly,

J. M. MASON.

The liberality of his congregation towards distant objects, is incidentally shown by the following note to an intimate friend:

TO THE REV. J. McJIMSEY.

NEW YORK, Feb. 24, 1806.

MY DEAR FRIEND: You doubtless had good reason to grant the moderation. There are times, in which people must be permitted, even in their folly, to "to manage their own affairs in their own way." But if the settlement go on, and New Shawangunk shall not appear to have wounded herself, and injured the interests of our body, by her third weak establishment, I shall be greatly and happily disappointed.

I have just heard that our friends at White Lake are proposing to visit us in a few days, in order to raise money toward the building a place of worship. If this report is correct, I beg you will stop them, for their own sakes. They will, infallibly, be unsuccessful at present; and that would dishearten and hurt them more than the desertion of their former allies. Last summer, Mr. Laurie raised upwards of eight hundred dollars in my congregation chiefly; a few weeks ago Dr. Agnew, from Marsh Creek, raised near three hundred; Mr. Easton is just leaving us for Montreal, with eight hundred dollars more. And in the course of a month or two, I shall levy my annual subsidy for the General Synod, to the amount of one thousand dollars. There is a point beyond which men must not be pushed. If fresh applications pour in upon us just now, we shall grow impatient, perhaps rude. Let as have a few months breathing; and probably White Lake will not suffer in the end.

Ever yours,

J. M. MASON.

The Editor of The Eclectic Review, in London, had by letter importuned him to contribute to its pages. The manner in which he excuses himself, and at the same time defends himself, against certain strictures, appears in the following extracts from his answer dated 22d April, 1806:—

"I thank you for the hint concerning the occurrence of the term "pride," in my oration on General Hamilton. It is just, and shall be remembered. It is very natural that readers on your side of the water should suspect the eulogium to be overcharged. So do some among ourselves; but not one who *knew* him. I knew him well, and I assure you that what I have said is sober, literal truth. Such a human being I never saw, and probably never shall see, in this world. I have heard that I am treated with great severity in some of your reviews, for pronouncing an oration *at all*, on a man who died as Hamilton died. It does not surprise me. Had a similar affair happened in Britain, I should perhaps have formed a similar judgment. The serious people *here* were, I believe, of a different mind;

and so would yours have been, had they been on the spot. Never was there a stronger comment on the maxim, that circumstances alter cases. I shall learn from it, I trust, with some efficacy, a new lesson against hasty judging. I consulted friends of the most intelligent piety, and they did not hesitate as to the propriety of my acquiescing in the wish of the Cincinnati. I was relieved also, in some measure, by the eulogy of David over Saul, who died by his *own* hand. *Sed de his satis.*

"When you consider how I am situated, you will not lay much stress upon my personal contributions. The duties attached to a pretty large congregation—to the education of the students in our Theological Seminary—to the editorship of the Christian's Magazine—to the secretaryship of the N. Y. Missionary Society, and incidental avocations—are more than enough for one individual.

"Affectionately yours,

"REV. S. GREATHEAD. J. M. MASON."

In a letter of introduction to a much esteemed Christian friend in London, he thus avails himself of the opportunity to unbosom himself concerning his own personal religion, the general aspects of Providence, and the state of his Seminary:—

TO J. HARDCASTLE, ESQ.

NEW YORK, April 19, 1806.

MY VALUED FRIEND: My chief design in this letter is to impart to you a share of the pleasure which I recently enjoyed, in becoming acquainted with the bearer, Mr. * * * * of Philadelphia. He is a young gentleman engaged in commerce, very highly respected as a man, and much beloved as a Christian. Your heart will warm to him as to one who has "obtained like precious faith"—may I not say—(my soul trembles, and my eyes fill, while I ask the question)—"*with* US?" Oh, how blessed to *know*, amid the seductions of sense, and the conflicts with the "law in the members," to know "whom we have believed!" I desire, if I can rightly judge of anything which passes in my own mind, to "live by faith;" to "walk by faith;" to overcome by faith; to "die in faith:" But I find it to be another affair altogether than I thought it to be nineteen years ago, when, I trust, I was enabled to commit myself as a perishing sinner to the Lord Jesus, as the Lord my righteousness. I am only learning, as yet, the alphabet of that supernatural science, which teaches us to "rest in him" every day, and all the day, as the "Lord our STRENGTH." I have been preaching for some time past on the 130th Psalm. If I have no other fellowship with the "man after God's own heart," I understand him when he speaks of the "depths;" and can repeat after him, with pungent emotion, "out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord." On the afternoon of last Lord's day, I reached the point of consolation, and intend to dwell on it again to-morrow; "there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared." Blessed be his name for such relief. Ah, my friend, nothing but such forgiveness as has God's greatness marked upon it, will suit such a sinner as I am compelled to see myself to be. I look up to his heavens; I stretch out my hand; and remember that in this very matter of forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, his ways are above our ways, as the heavens are above the earth. Whenever I incline to mean thoughts of his mercies; to cherish secret pride by opposing the magnitude of transgression to the freedom of their exercise, I compare the length of my arm with the height of the firmament, and am sometimes permitted to sit down, to look at the sacrifice, which, through the eternal Spirit, his dear Son offered for sins; to wonder, and weep, and blush, and praise, while I read, "there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared." Am I intrusive, or loquacious? Bear with me. The uppermost idea when I began this letter, was that of introducing a Christian to your notice, and it has insensibly diverted my pen from every thing which I proposed to touch upon. I can *but touch* upon any thing, being pinched for time.

Notwithstanding your pleasant speculations, my apprehension that "an horror of great darkness" is about to fall upon the church, grows more deep and dreadful every hour. Some reasons for this apprehension will be mingled with the discussions in my Missionary Sermon. All the contrary appearances coincide well with the general principle. There is nothing in them, my friend, but preparation. Our greatest joy on their account, is only a "little reviving in our bondage." "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabiters of the earth:" She is only beginning to uncover the blood which she has for ages concealed; and every drop of it must be reckoned for; and the score cleaned, before a better state of things can take place.

The United States, though not within the immediate sweep of the judgments which are now inflicting upon the man of sin, present to my view prospects which fill me with dismay. The extreme apathy of professors on the one hand; and that miserable cowardice of teachers, on the other; a cowardice which shrinks from the danger of being unpopular, as from the worst of evils in this life, are paving the way for a desolation that will burst ere long upon their heads with the suddenness and fury of a water-spout. Our natural population will demand, in the course of thirty years from this date, not less than eight thousand ministers of the word! And the churches are fast asleep; no provision hardly among any of them to meet the exigency; they cannot be persuaded that their circumstances are so inauspicious; and that unless God pour out his spirit to awaken them from their lethargy, we shall shortly have, in the very heart of our country, five or six millions, the offspring of our own loins, in a state of gross heathenism; and nearly as much the object of missionary notice, as the Caffres and Hindoos! With this terrifying spectacle staring them in the face, our citizens are soothing themselves with general reflections on the care of God toward his people; and then fold their arms in sloth; as if ministers were to be *rained* upon them from heaven. Not one of the churches in this vast continent, excepting our own small body, is taking efficient steps for self-preservation, in providing a powerful ministry. Recommendations, and addresses, and exhortations are published. The people read them and praise them, and say, What a fine thing it would be to have something done; and what a pity it is that there is such a want and there the matter ends. Nobody *acts*. You will, however, derive some satisfaction from the efforts which *we* are making, though on a contracted scale. An act for establishing our Seminary passed our Synod last May; and the Seminary commenced in November. My students, as yet, are only eight; but they are precious youths. They all indicate the savour of godliness; six of them have choice talents; and they have engaged in their studies with a zeal and intenseness that entitle us to hope for much comfort. The number, next season, will probably be doubled. The "act," which I herewith transmit, will show that so far as human precautions can avail, we are determined not to license novices. My own congregation, though by no means wealthy, contributes annually toward the support of the Seminary, above $1000. This example is not without effect; but if it be not backed by the public spirit of other congregations, will not be sufficient. The point to which I have long laboured to bring our churches, is this, that students of Theology are their children and must be supplied with the requisite means of future usefulness—that it is chimerical to dream of a well-appointed ministry, unless they charge themselves with the expense of maintaining and educating such students as are in straitened circumstances—and that as it is the Lord's ordinance, that his churches must support his ministers, it is for them to consider whether this does not involve a similar obligation toward those who "desire the office of a bishop," but are unable to support themselves while preparing for it: at any rate it is only entering upon that work of love a little sooner. Some of my noblest youth could not move a step, without the aid of our young fund. What gratitude, my dear friend, do we not owe to our British patrons? I feel its whole force; in the name of all, I thank you, and thank our God, again and again.

I must break away. It is Saturday, about midnight. The risen Saviour bless my friend, and his dear family. So prays the soul of

Your affectionate brother in Christ,

J. M. MASON.

Early in the summer of this year he sent to his uncle, in Edinburgh, a letter of fifteen pages which he had been preparing at intervals for several months, and which was as interesting as it was long. In answer to inquiries, it gives a brief account of the Society of the Cincinnati; speaks of the Seminary—particularly of its plan, and its struggles in the Synod, with their happy termination; gives his views respecting Christian liberality for sustaining and extending Christ's kingdom; and expresses his ideas concerning a successful merchant's retiring from active business. From this he naturally passes to his own labours, especially as connected with the Seminary, which had just opened. He glances at the aspect of Europe, in connexion with Bonaparte's career. He then closes with an undisguised opinion of his children—such as must be allowable in an ingenuous spirit speaking freely to a near relative. The public, perhaps, have no more to do with it, than as they may wish to know the man. With this consideration, we give the letter in part.

TO MR. EBENEZER MASON, EDINBURGH.

New York, June 23, 1805.

My dear Uncle: I hope you received my letter of the 4th April, by Mr. Silliman. I had not, then, leisure to notice particularly, several things contained in yours of the 4th and 5th December, 1804. The Society of the Cincinnati, about which you inquire, was formed at the close of the Revolutionary war, by the officers of the American army, to perpetuate their personal friendships; to support, in peace, the principles in behalf of which they had drawn their swords; and to assist decayed members and their families with pecuniary relief. It is perpetuated by *hereditary succession*, (a horrible thing, this, no doubt, in a republican country!) the eldest son taking his father's place, or even the place of his grandfather during his father's life. This privilege does not, however, extend to honorary members, of whom I have lately become one. Their right is not preserved in their families, but dies with themselves. General Washington was the President-General during his life; and after him, the still greater General Hamilton. There were, at first, thirteen branches of the Society, according to the number of American States at its formation, and they took the name of the State to which they belonged respectively, as "The New York State Society of the Cincinnati." They meet annually, by delegation in the "General Society of the Cincinnati," and it was here that Washington and Hamilton presided. The latter has been succeeded by Major-General Charles Colesworth Pinckney, the federal competitor with Mr. Jefferson for the Presidency of the United States. All the officers of the Cincinnati are chosen yearly.

From a combination of such men, important political effects might have been anticipated, although it never was their intention to interfere as a body, in political measures. And indeed, apprehensions were entertained at first that the Association was less laudable and innocent than it professed to be. Judge Burke, of South Carolina, an honest, queer Hibernian, who used to talk of "kicking a man's breech *to his face*," blew a furious blast against it, in a pamphlet with the caption, "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion;" a sort of trumpet, by the way, which rather ungraciously befitted his honour's mouth. But the noise soon subsided; and the Institution of the Cincinnati has proved to be one of the most harmless things in existence. Had their chiefs lived; had their ardour remained; had their funds accumulated, and a separate interest, of which their members might be jealous, arisen up, their weight might have been very considerable. But Washington and Hamilton, and Greene, with others, their most distinguished men, are gone: their zeal has cooled with age. New objects have engrossed their attention; political factions have divided them; their funds are scarcely equal to very limited charities; and they have no social principle of sufficient strength to resist the imperceptible, but steady and powerful influence of surrounding change. Several of the State Societies have dissolved themselves by their own act, and the probability is, that the rest who shall not follow the example, will gradually dwindle away.

The opinions of my friends who have taken the trouble to consider the sketch which I forwarded of a plan of education for our Seminary, are very gratifying. They came too late for the Synod, and as they propose little alteration, we have not lost by the delay. The act for instituting the Seminary is finally passed, and its operations commence on the first of November next. The chief debate turned upon the time, which it was proposed to reduce to three years. For a good while I was much alarmed lest that fatal proposal should succeed. The debate was the most close and solemn and spirited and eloquent, that I ever saw in an ecclesiastical court. There was no difference of judgment as to the abstract propriety of obliging the young men to study Theology five years; but many of the Synod feared that so great a stretch at once might shock too violently the habits of our country, and defeat our own intention.

The longer the discussion lasted, and it occupied us a day and a half, the more was gained by the advocates of the highest period, and it became evident that the question would be decided either by a majority of one, or by the casting vote of the moderator. As such a decision upon a measure which requires our whole strength and combined zeal, was to be deprecated, and would have sent the one-half of the Synod away discontented, and the other dispirited, the vote was postponed. No man wished for anything but an issue most conducive to general utility; and as no one would yield his convictions, it was thought best not to push a trial of strength, but to compromise. With this understanding, I withdrew the motion for five years, and replaced it with one which left the time blank. The brother who principally opposed me, moved, in the spirit of conciliation, to fill it up with four. The motion was seconded by myself, and passed unanimously. In consequence, we parted in perfect cheerfulness, and resolved, each in his own sphere, to promote the common object. The minutes of Synod, which are now in press, will show you general results. One thing is worthy of notice, that while the time of study has been abridged, the quantity remains the same; that is, the Synod have crowded into the last two years of the course all the studies which I had allotted for them; and I was not conscious of leaving either the Professor or his pupils much idle time. I know how it will work. Actual experiment will prove that they exact impossibilities; but it did not suit my ideas of advantage to the church to demonstrate this. I let it go, under a pretty strong impression that the students themselves will be the first to complain that the period is too short; and thus all will be gained eventually.

It has long been one of my doctrines from the pulpit, as well as privately, that much as Christians seem to do, and much as is really done, for the interest of the Redeemer's kingdom, the amount is trifling, very trifling, when compared with their means. I do not understand the Christianity which expends hundreds and thousands upon objects of lucre and pleasure, and wonders at its own liberality when it reluctantly parts with the fiftieth part of the sum for the glory of Him who washed us from our sins in His own blood! If Christians had one-tenth of that zeal for their infinitely precious Redeemer that they discover in temporal pursuits; if they had the tenth part of that faith in His promise for this world which they repose in a promissory bank note, millions would flow into the treasuries devoted to the extension of His kingdom; and instead of incitements there would be need of restraint upon their liberality. For ourselves, I hope that the worst is over; and if our ministers be true to the best interests of our church, the Seminary will not sink. My own congregation sets an example which is great, not because it equals their resources, but because it surpasses and leaves out of sight anything that others do. Their last contribution was $700; and I consider it as certain that their annual donations in future will not be less than $1,100. The others are coming forward, but it is tough work. Can you find us no more benefactors with you? Every guinea is of moment. Our attempt is the most vigorous that ever was made in the United States, and if it fail will hardly be revived.

JANUARY, 1806.

I AM not at all surprised at your new commercial engagements. It is a pretty thing for a man who has been in active life for fifteen or twenty years, to *talk*, of retiring and enjoying himself while he retains his vigour. But he forgets that he cannot find permanent enjoyment in the prosecution of any plan which violates his habits. I cannot, however, help regretting in some degree, your return to the counting house, as I am afraid it will extinguish my hope of seeing you on this side of the Atlantic. Pluck up a little resolution, and step over. It is not half so formidable in fact as in imagination. Only suppose that you are going to London upon business, and the matter is fixed. How happy I should feel to see you pass into my parlour! I cherish the image of such a scene as it would open, with an affection which sometimes throws me into a reverie, from which I awake only to sigh over the illusion. For myself, I have little expectation of visiting you a third time. But there is no calculating futurities. Had I any call from clear duty, I would not turn on my heel to escape an Atlantic voyage. I am, however, entangled in a set of connexions from which it is hard to break away. In addition to my domestic and parochial charges, I have now the Theological Seminary on my hands. It opened in the beginning of November last. All the students have not yet arrived; for they are hardly aware of the nature of the system under which they are placed. We have been so much accustomed to feeble management; and it is so much the fashion in many parts of the country for people to do in their religious relations, "every one what is right in his own eyes," that they can hardly believe that a church is in earnest when she acts as well as speaks; and follows up her arrangements with decisive measures. I have at present, eight students; all, I trust, scholars in the school of Christ: all of them amiable and exemplary, and diligent; and several of them possessing distinguished talent. Two of them are from Kentucky, eight hundred miles distant from home; and none of them from a less distance than 200 miles. I spend with them, on an average, an hour and a half every day, excepting the Lord's day. You may easily conceive that I have not much leisure. My work is hard, but it is most pleasant. Two gloomy thoughts often, very often, overwhelm me; the one arises from incessant discoveries of my own deficiency, and the difficulty of making it up; the other, from a fear that after all, the Institution may perish for want of pecuniary support. Oh, where are the magnanimous souls, and the bountiful hands? I solemnly protest, that if I know myself, such an event would afflict me a thousand times more than the loss of all my earthly substance, were it a thousand times greater than it is. I should next look for the "besom of destruction." Very great things in the extension of Christ's Kingdom, I do not expect. They hardly accord with prophetic or providential data. If we be enabled not to "lose the things which we have wrought;" to contribute toward the preservation of that "seed" out of which the future harvest is to spring, we shall be highly honoured. My general opinion, which, I pray, may turn out to be erroneous, is, that the world is undergoing a sort of equalizing process, with respect to religious matters. Missionary efforts will do little but scatter the "seed," and gather, perhaps, some first-fruits; the churches already possessing the gospel, will probably decrease in numbers, and in power, and an "horror of great darkness" settle down upon them; so that little but seed shall be found upon the earth. I look upon the extraordinary Missionary spirit as a preparation for this; that the "seed" may be carried into every corner before the period of sluggishness and carnality arrive. I fear, O how I fear, that it is near, even at the doors!

We have just got the news of Bonaparte's reverses, in the beginning of December last. Every body is elated with the hope that he is at the close of his career. But wherefore all this joy? Bonaparte may be cut down, but his fall will not terminate the woes of Europe. Statesmen imagine that if he were out of the way, the old order of things would be re-established; or at least, some better order than the present. Vain imagination! Mischiefs which have been ripening for half a century are not to be cured in a day, nor to be counteracted by covenants. They have penetrated society to the very heart, and are thrilling along every nerve. But I turn away from the statesman to my Bible. I see Jehovah come forth out of his place to "plead with all flesh;" specifically with the "man of sin;" he will not return till he have finished the work; his supper, that "supper of the great God" is preparing, but not yet prepared. Judgment after judgment, vengeance after vengeance, terror after terror must be expected till he have slain that "wicked one with the breath of his lips." There is a great deal of rugged work to be done yet, in executing his sentence.—"And blessed be his glorious name forever," that he does not exact the performance of it from his own people. Shedding of blood, even the blood of Christ's incorrigible foes, is a task not fit for hands which are "lifted up without wrath." Wonderful wisdom! Wonderful condescension! He puts it into the hands of them that hate him? Little did the devil think when he was seducing men to infidelity, that he was providing instruments for the destruction of his own kingdom, by those very severities which involve heinous crimes in their immediate authors. Let Bonaparte perish: "God will destroy them who destroy the earth;" but other Bonapartes will arise, and find ample occupation. The cup is going round. Oh Britain, my heart trembles at the mention of thy name! In thy skirts is blood, the blood of many of God's precious saints; shed not only under Popish darkness but under Protestant light;

and, to this day, the nation has not acknowledged it to be a sin! The hour of vengeance approaches. Lord, "for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thine inheritance," which are in the midst of her, let her visitation be short.

I perceive that my letter is swelled into a sort of historico-critical dissertation, and am startled when, on looking over the pages, I find it to cover the incidents of more than a twelvemonth. I am almost ashamed to tell you at this date, that I have another son who was a year old on the 16th May ult., and is now running about, and beginning to speak; he is the sturdiest of the tribe. I have called him, after my old venerable friend, "Erskine." John and Abraham are at a new school, which three other ministers and myself have erected and control; it is called "The New York Grammar School." Our design is to improve the state of education in this city; and our plan, thus far, succeeds to admiration. The girls are at a very good seminary, lately set up by Miss Thomas, an English lady, who taught with reputation at Bath. They are doing well. Euphemia, who was twelve in April, is a superior child; her sister, Catharine, is full of humour, and makes respectable progress. E. is all mind. James Hall will be three next month; he opens fast; very like his sister Euphemia. Mr. Silliman returned in good health, after a passage of twenty-five days from Greenock. (You see a trip to New York is just nothing, or next to it.) He speaks in the most affectionate manner of your friendship to him. Give my love to Aunt and the girls. Oh, how I long for another sight of you all! Shall I ever have that happiness? But it will be better, infinitely better, to meet in that world of light and purity, where there will be nothing to separate or annoy. This is the sum of duty and of bliss, to belong to Christ, and to be conformed to his image. Oh, that we may experience much of the transforming power of his grace! To that grace I commend you. Ever yours,

J. M. MASON.

P.S.—I made a mistake in Erskine's age. He was born on the 16th April, 1805. A slip of memory is allowable when little folks muster by *sevens;* Euphemia, John, Catharine, Abraham, Ebenezer, James, Erskine!

J. M. M.

A man's character may in a good degree be learned from the nature of his friendships, and the tenor of his correspondence. It is also interesting to see how Christians and missionaries thought and felt half a century ago. To these considerations may be added, that the letter now to be presented, like a former one from the same mission, is necessary to explain some statements to be made in a future page, and that the missionary field of Tahiti has assumed a more interesting aspect by events which have since transpired:—

TO THE REV. DR. MASON.

TAHITI, Aug. 8th, 1806.

REV. AND DEAR SIR: Having taken the liberty about nine months ago of addressing a few lines to you per favour of Captain Sowle of the *Taber*, of Providence which was then on her way to Canton, that vessel unexpectedly calling here on her way homewards, we embrace the opportunity of acquainting you with a few particulars concerning the present state of this Mission.

It is a comfortable thought that our gracious Lord has not left this guilty world, and that in spite of the daring infidelity that has in so awful a manner overspread the greatest part of the so-called Christian world, "the Lord reviveth his work in the midst of the years," and that there are in sundry parts of the world, such extraordinary exertions for the enlargement of the Redeemer's kingdom.

We rejoice to hear that many parts of your happy land have experienced the plentiful outpourings of the good Spirit of our God, in all his gracious and benign influences; surely he hath sent "a plentiful rain, and thereby did confirm his inheritance, when it was weary."

Many and various are the difficulties we have to encounter. Our discouragements from within, and from without, are not a few. One circumstance that tends greatly to cause our knees to wax feeble, and our hands to hang down, is, that we have had many opportunities to transmit to them our journals and letters, but what they may have sent to us, we know not, as our last letters from London are dated so far back as 1800.

Having said this, it will appear no wonder, when we say our anxiety at not hearing from them is very great.

Pomare, the King of this Island, treats us very kindly. He has made some advances towards civilization; he has learned to read and write his own language, and makes some small progress in the English; but he has not at present, the least inclination to embrace Christianity.

We shall only add that we shall esteem it a great favour to hear from you, if ever an opportunity offers. If you could send us any numbers of the New York Missionary Magazine, they would also be thankfully received. As American vessels frequently call at Port Jackson, a letter sent by any one of them, directed for us, to the care of Rev. Mr. Marsden, New South Wales, might possibly reach us.

We have the honour to remain, etc.,

JOHN YOUL, for the Society.

Since the following letter was written, the name of its author has become illustrious in the Missionary world. This, together with the spirit which it breathes, gives new force to its appeals:—

TO THE REV. DR. MASON.

CALCUTTA, Dec. 3, 1806.

DEAR BROTHER: The unexpected departure of our friend, Mr. Smith, makes it somewhat difficult for me to write to you so fully as I could wish. The loss, however, will not be great as I have already written an account of almost every particular concerning the mission in this country, to several friends in America.

Our state at present exhibits a singular mixture of opening prospects and clouded sky; of progress in the work of God, and circumstances of a retrograde tendency; but upon the whole, I think we have much reason for encouragement, and much encouragement to hope in God.

Some circumstances of an untoward nature have occurred lately, which Mr. Smith can better explain than I ought to do. These have operated to our discouragement, but are, blessed be God! much lighter than we at first apprehended they would be, and, I trust, will in due time, be entirely removed. Success has attended the mission, and it is impossible for any one to deny the benign influence which the Gospel has had on many who, but a little time ago, were bowing down to idols. The number who have been baptized and received into the church has been upwards of one hundred. Some of these have apostatized, and others are persons of doubtful character, but there remains a goodly number who are an ornament to the Christian name, and some have departed this life, giving glory to the Saviour with their expiring breath.

Another church has been constituted in the northern part of Bengal, which has lately been blessed with a small addition, and it is highly probable that more than one other will ere long be constituted in other parts.

About a dozen of our brethren are employed as itinerants, half of whom are possessed of respectable gifts for preaching the Gospel, and the others attend them as companions in their excursions, besides which places are opened for the more regular preaching of the Gospel at three places in the neighbourhood of Serampore, viz., at Calcutta, Chundunnugur and Chrinura. At Calcutta, God has stirred up an American or two, to care for the perishing Heathen, and one of them is fitting up a place for preaching in the Bengalee language. O, that the Lord may smile on these attempts!

The translation of the Sacred Scriptures into all the Orienta languages to which we can have access, is with us a matter of great importance. It is probable that so many advantages will scarcely ever be found again, combined in one situation, as now unite to assist us in this work; and the liberal supplies of money afforded from England and America, and raised in India, will help us forward in it to a very great extent, though the expenses are necessarily very great. We have begun the translation into ten languages, in all, and have commenced the printing of four besides the Bengalee, viz., the Hindoostanee, Mahratta, Oorissa, and the Sangshrit. The copiousness and flexibility of the Sangshrit language is so great that it will admit of a nearly literal rendering from the Greek and Hebrew. Beside the five which we have begun to print, translations are begun in Persian, Gujerattee, Telinga, Chinese, and the language of the

Seeks. I hope to see them all finished, if God grant health and means for ten or twelve years to come.

You will greatly oblige me by sending me letters as often as you can, stuffed as full of news respecting the Gospel as they can hold. We are in a world of barrenness as it respects Gospel light, and you are in a land resembling Eden in fertility. You must therefore excuse the barrenness of my intelligence, and out of pity communicate out of your abundance.

I am affectionately yours,

W. CAREY.

CHAPTER XXI.

1806.

THE SEMINARY.

Meeting of the Synod—Danger from a new quarter—Letter to a Student—Another—Letter to Rev. A. Rankin, Kentucky—Letter to Rev. John Steele—Letter to Mr. Thornton, London.

In the beginning of November, 1805, the Seminary was opened with eight students, viz., John Lind, James M. Matthews, William McMurray, George Stewart, George Buchanan, Samuel Crothers, James McChord, and John Clarke.

At the Meeting of the General Synod, May, 1806, the Board of Superintendents reported that at an examination held by them, " the students had acquitted themselves to their satisfaction."

In a letter to the Burgher Synod of Scotland, the American Reformed Synod further remark: " The important object to which our hopes and exertions have been for several years directed, our Theological Seminary, is, through the tender mercy of our God, at length accomplished. It commenced last November, at the City of New York, with eight students. The prospect of increase and utility is beyond what our fondness had ventured to anticipate. Obstacle after obstacle has been removed; our hearts are encouraged; our hands are made strong; and we proceed in the humble confidence, that this plant, which the Lord's own right hand hath planted, will be watered with the dews of His blessing, till it grow up into a tree of life, and spread healing influences over our vast continent."

At this meeting of the Synod, as usual, a very large amount of duties were thrown upon Dr. Mason; and with unflinching energy, he discharged them. Among others was, a perplexing case of discipline; a draft of an application to the Legislature of New York, for an act of incorporation; and the selection of extracts from their minutes for publication: and the "causing of them to be printed and distributed among the Presbyteries." His correspondence furnishes ample proof of the pains which he took, in the business part of carrying out all the measures with which he was charged. He was as ready to apply himself to the drudgery of details, as to the formation of plans.

The Seminary had no sooner commenced in New York, than leading spirits of the West began to think of establishing one or more nearer home. A prominent member of the Presbytery of Kentucky took a deep interest in the Lexicon Academy as a defence of orthodoxy, against what he called the infidelity of the Transylvania University. The trustees, under his influence, determined to connect with it a theological department, and even went so far as to appoint a Professor, and to ask support from the General Synod. This of course would have left only a divided support for the Institution already established by the Synod. This brief statement is sufficient to explain many allusions in Dr. Mason's subsequent correspondence, especially with his Western brethren.

It also explains some things in a communication to one of his theological students. This student was James McChord, deservedly ranking high in the Seminary. He was naturally of an earnest temperament, and withall possessed of deep piety. Though perhaps not well balanced, his mind was powerful. If properly directed, he was capable of high attainments, and of great achievements. Ardent, bold and vigorous, he had an unusual facility in acquiring knowledge, and an equal readiness in using it. At the same time, as often happens with such persons, he was morbidly sensitive. His feelings often controlled his judgment, and at times subjected him to such depressions as abated both his happiness and usefulness. He was of too lofty a spirit patiently to receive pecuniary aid in prosecuting his studies. The expenses of New York were beyond his own private means. Remittances from Kentucky were slow and scanty. Some of the methods by which he had hoped to help himself disappointed him. Under these circumstances, as he was spending his vacation with a distant relative in the interior of Pennsylvania, he began to think of returning home without completing his course at the Seminary. He even hoped to prepare for the ministry with such aids as might be procured in the West. Such a train of thoughts almost brought him to the conclusion that it might be expedient to establish a second seminary beyond the Alleghanies. Would it not save much expense and much inconvenience? Would not Western students be nearer their friends and nearer their fields of future labour?

A long letter, greatly expanding such thoughts, and pressing them with his characteristic warmth, Mr. McChord addressed to his Professor, who promptly replied as follows:—

TO MR. JAMES McCHORD.

HACKENSACK, N. J., 19th Aug., 1806.

MY DEAR SIR: In consequence of removing with my family from the city for the warm season, and being absent some time in supplying a vacancy, I did not receive your letter till yesterday. I read it with a surprise not usual to me; surprise mingled with emotions which it is neither necessary nor easy to express; surprise and emotions which terminated in an anguish not soon to be removed by anything but your abandoning your present design of returning to Kentucky. I acknowledge that your objections are not trifling, and that your situation is calculated to make melancholy impressions upon even a cool and intrepid mind; and yet I cannot admit the justness of your reasonings, nor consider the state of your feelings as the result of anything else than a strong, a subtle, and a most dangerous temptation. All your difficulties, which you have displayed with force as well as frankness, fall under one of two heads: either the *general* principle of attending upon the Seminary at such a distance, or your own *private embarrassments.*

With respect to the first, you cannot imagine that most of those things on which you dwell, did not offer themselves to reflecting men when pondering the subject long before it could have been an object of your own serious attention. They were perceived, they were balanced and examined again and again; their importance was not disputed; but on weighing them against the unspeakably greater things which affect the very vitals of Christian prosperity, and may reach down to successive ages, and to millions of individuals, the sacrifice which they involve was seen to be indispensable, and must be submitted to by the churches till such time as the system of ministerial preparation can be properly ramified. How soon such a disposition can be accomplished, is to be determined only by events. The *period* will depend materially upon the zeal and concert with which the existing Institution shall be cherished; the *measure itself* upon its success. Your reasonings on the general principle are precisely such as apply to every place twenty miles from the city, excepting the long absence from home; and if acted upon would consign to perdition in a single day all that has been gained by the exertions of ten years, and with it the faint hope which the God of salvation has permitted to gladden and bless our church.

Even if other disastrous issues should not happen, we would inevitably revert to the old, miserable method of introducing our youth into the ministry. The interests of ignorance and conceit would soon grow too powerful for control, and we should have our full share of the guilt contracted by concurring with the tendency of the times toward the destruction of the church of God; and that under the peculiar aggravation of having wantonly thrown away the means which His providence had put into our hands, of circumscribing its ravages, although we might not altogether resist its march.

The single point in which these remarks meet is this: that students in remote parts of the country must put up with the inconveniences of the present arrangement till they shall be in a capacity of meliorating our condition. That may be much sooner than they now deem possible; but if they yield to despondency, or turn impatient under self-denials, the blessing will never be obtained; they will defeat their own ends; will mar their own usefulness; and will have to sit down under the reproach, the shame and the crime of having conspired with the enemy to desolate the heritage of God. Should you pursue the plan to which your letter discovers a leaning, I shall look upon it as a signal for the desertion of all the youth from the Synod of Scioto. Not one more shall I ever expect from that quarter. The reasons which justify you in setting the example, will justify them in following it. Considering, too, how far you have gone, and that you must justify yourself, it will be hardly possible to avoid injuring that Institution which you abandon, and that church which you disobey. Such a desertion, which would naturally arise out of your precedent, would probably produce, first dissension in the body, and then a rent. Not only so; but if the students in one Synod should draw back, it will be impossible to retain the others; and thus again our labour will be lost. Should it be otherwise, it will be because God has mercies for us in store, to confer which he will counteract the ordinary laws of human conduct.

Besides, my friend, you stand in relations of which you do not seem to realize the solemnity. You are not your own; nor yet the Presbytery's. A greater than either has the right to dispose of you; and that is the *church aggregate* with which you are connected; or, to speak more correctly, the Lord Jesus, the King of that church. Some hints in your letter concerning the probable course which the Presbytery might take, and of your sheltering yourself under their authority, convince me that it is your duty *not to stir* in your contemplated journey. Because it is evident to me, as the noon day, that your notions of the visible unity of the church of Christ, and of the ties which bind her members, are very inaccurate, and must be rectified; unless you wish, as I know you cannot, to proceed on principles which will not further her peace, but insure her harm. In fact the attendance of her students for some time, in the same Seminary, appears to be the only method of preserving her unity.

A circumstance on which you lay some stress, is the separation for four years from parents and friends. What has your Master said on this subject? Was this your stipulation to Him, that you were never to leave your kindred in His service for three or four years? Ought such an objection to be heard out of a Christian mouth, when for the sake of *money*, youth are every day leaving their relatives, with little prospect of seeing them again, these relatives consenting? And when many of our brethren have forsaken their friends forever, that they may serve God in the gospel of his Son among us? A young man who will not go four years from home in order to become qualified for the ministry, furnishes no flattering presage of firmness under the cross. But the ground is tender, and I quit it.

A word or two shall dispatch the question of your personal embarrassments. They are such as can be removed, and as I will undertake to remove. The enclosed draught for $50, which does not come out of the public fund, but is offered to you "in the name of a disciple," will I hope partly relieve them.

I shall not conceal from you that I am somewhat hurt by your closeness on such matters. If I cannot prevail with my students to treat me as a *friend* to whom they may freely disclose their situation, I shall be unhappy indeed. Nothing would more quickly induce me to resign my trust.

Upon the whole, my dear McChord, for I certainly love as well as respect you, I esteem your purpose of going back to Kentucky to be a temptation of the devil. He has played off his artifices against our Seminary. His first attempt was upon the *people*, whom he endeavoured to stir up; and *that* failed. His next was upon the *ministers;* and *that* failed. He is now, as a last resort, tampering with the students; the Lord, his conqueror, grant *that* may fail too. For myself, being solemnly persuaded that through the medium of this Seminary we are holding in our hand the religious fate of generations unborn, and the decision of some questions essential to the interest of the Gospel among other denominations, I shall, through my God assisting me, with all my might, to my last breath, withstand whatever tends directly or indirectly to its subversion. I have taken my deliberate resolution to risk, in its defence, the loss of popularity, friends, purse, and every other consequence. Under this impression, believing that the failure of our experiment would seal the doom of our churches, and believing too that your quitting the Seminary at *this juncture*, and under *existing circumstances*, might be influential in causing its failure, I do, before God, with fear and trembling, enter my PROTEST against your return to Kentucky, and throw upon your conscience the responsibility for all results! Do not think me harsh; I am only faithful. My bowels yearn and my eyes fill, while I write to you; and from my inmost soul, commending you to God and to the word of his grace,

I am, in real affection, yours, etc.

J. M. MASON.

We need only add that McC. completed his entire course in the Seminary, and no one ever left it with more unbounded admiration, or filial affection for his faithful teacher.

Another student was in some respects of a different temper, but no less sensitive. He was decidedly amiable, excellent, and promising, but disposed to shrink from receiving aid out of the public funds, and therefore desirous of abridging his preparatory course of study. Communicating his views in a letter, he was answered by another, of which we give a brief extract:—

"I am deceived in you if you do not discover hereafter that the Superintendents have judged well for your comfort and prosperity; and that your dissatisfaction has arisen more from impatience than wisdom. I allude particularly to your reluctance to bow to your external situation with regard to support. It grieves me, my dear young friend, to observe in you an unwillingness to depend upon the providence of God. For it is on him that you do depend. Can you honestly pray "Give me this day my daily bread," and swallow it with reluctance? or be almost ready to cast it from you, because he gives it in a channel different from that which you would have chosen? Have you not felt it an affliction that your pecuniary resources are not such as to enable you to carry on your studies without distraction and to such an extent as might justify a hope of performing eminent service to his church? And now, when the impediment is removed, in a way which you could not have foreseen, do you turn round and convert the very boon which his hand presents to you into a ground of complaint? Had he commissioned the ravens to feed you, as they did the venerable prophet, would this have mortified you? And is the favour less precious, or less sweet, because instead of dispensing it by the ministry of an unclean bird, he confers it by the hand of that Church which his Son has redeemed, and his Spirit inhabits? Nay, my dear youth, there must be no more of this! It is a bad preparative for preaching to others submission to the righteousness of God, and the sacrifice of their pride at the feet of his sovereignty. You are only called to the exercise of a little Christian principle; and must not flinch at the first twinge given to "flesh and blood." If, in the very outset, you have to cherish a fellow-feeling with many of the household of faith, you are but treading in the steps of your Divine Master, and learning to be their comforter."

He also finished his entire course at the Seminary, and became a divine of distinction and usefulness.

As already intimated, serious thoughts were entertained of establishing a Theological department in the Lexington Academy, and some incipient steps towards it were actually taken. The Rev. Adam Rankin informed Dr. Mason, in a letter of 1805, that the Trustees of Lexington Academy had promised the Rev. Mr. Dobbin four hundred dollars per annum to teach divinity. In the same letter he says, that no parent in his State would send his son for a four years' course to New York, even if they should be kept free of charge;—alleging that they "have too much spirit to be so dependent, and too little cash to defray the expense." This subject is embraced in Dr. Mason's answer. There is embraced in it also, an earnest expostulation with Mr. Rankin, on a difficulty which had arisen between him and one of the most able and promising young men who a few years before had come over from Scotland. The chief ground of complaint was a connexion which Mr. Bishop had formed with the Transylvania University. This was thought by Mr. Rankin to be in opposition to the Academy, which he was in the habit of calling his own. Whether the complaint proceeded from the spirit of true Christian faithfulness, or from an indiscreet zeal, it would be difficult to determine; but probably, if Dr. Mason's expostulations at this early day had been duly heeded, they would have prevented a most acrid controversy which lasted for many years, and which, after putting on a variety of new phases, as we shall have occasion to see, at last terminated very unhappily for the accuser:—

TO THE REV. ADAM RANKIN, KENTUCKY.

HACKENSACK, N. J., 9th Oct., 1806.

MY DEAR SIR: Your letter contains matters which grieve me, and on which I find it impossible to give any but a very general opinion. Decide between those of you who have opposite views concerning Mr. Bishop's connexion with the University, and the points involved in it, no man can, at this distance, and with the imperfect information which I possess. One thing is certain, that the division itself is wrong, and can produce only mischief. In various forms has the enemy assailed our body, and being foiled in other attempts, he is now trying the experiment of fomenting dissensions among our own members. Who is to blame in your uneasinesses—the Lord knoweth. It cannot be unseasonable to urge the Apostle's injunction: "Follow the things which make for peace, and things whereby one may edify another." The best of us are apt to be too much directed by our own spirit, and to allow too little for the feelings, the understanding and the conscience of our brethren. Your age, my dear Sir, your experience, and your entire standing in the church in Kentucky, put much in your power. You must be ready to bear many things even from your juniors. Gentleness and patience will do more towards removing the difficulties of both sides than obstinate contention. I have expressed the same thing to Mr. Bishop more than once. Let me say a word of that young man, whom I think I know. He must be soothed and not bearded. Kindness will melt him; harshness, rouse him into resistance, and he is capable of resisting desperately. He is of too much importance to be soured away; and a condescending deportment on your part may go far towards a pacification. Do not mistake me. I give no opinion on the merits of the case; I have none. But a greater than ministers, or judicatories, hath said, that "a soft tongue breaketh the bone."

All things considered, I am sorry that your trustees sent the invitation, mentioned in your letter, to Mr. Dobbin. It was certainly premature; and he acted prudently in declining it. The General Synod would have committed suicide in sanctioning the measure. You are not *yet* ripe for the erection of a branch of the Theological Seminary in Kentucky. You have not the books indispensable to its success, nor a single teacher who has been trained according to the plan which the General Synod has adopted, and which I hope nothing will induce them to abandon. Where is the hardship of submitting to the present arrangement for a *little while*, till you shall be able to act your part with vigour in the common system of ministerial preparation? I look for the day when *several* seminaries may be instituted in suitable places. But we must encounter difficulties at first; and surely the perfecting a great system of instruction for our future ministry, so that every part shall harmonize with every other, and the whole coöperate in promoting the peace of our Zion, is with sacrifices even larger than any to which you will probably be called. One principle must never be forgotten, viz., that whatever be the number of our seminaries, they must aggregately constitute *one whole;* and that *all* our students must at some period of their course, pass through the *same Alma Mater;* unless we mean to lay, in the very scheme for preserving our unity, the causes of future schism. Our churches are in danger of exemplifying the common frailty of human nature—rushing from one extreme to another. At first it was hardly possible to excite their attention to the value of a proper Theological Seminary *at all.* Now they have begun to favour the idea of having *several.* Thus by attempting too much at once, they are in danger of losing every thing. *Festina lente* is a lesson hard to learn, but fraught with practical wisdom. See that the trunk be well rooted and firm before you think of leading off branches, lest you destroy all. That sort of "independence" which will not allow youth to be provided for by the church of God, humbles, without surprising me. It is the spirit of the world, which desires to be as little in God's debt as possible. Men will eagerly grasp at advantages from parents, friends, the State; but an advantage held out to their children by the hand of God, through the agency of his church, they scorn to receive. Are these Christians? Or do they suppose that it is no sin to be *proud?* Why do they not disdain to let their sons, when *in* the ministry, be supported by the church? The principle is the same, the form only different. Oh! when shall we have more of the simplicity of the Gospel, and less of practical atheism in the shape *of spirit?*

Yours sincerely,

J. M. MASON.

In nearly all his correspondence of this period his thoughts were engrossed with the Seminary. In addition to the specimens already given of his various efforts at home, his letters to his friends abroad are still full of the same subject. Out of many, we select portions of one addressed to a friend in London, who had already given liberal aid, and had encouraged the hope of still more:—

DR. M. TO HENRY THORNTON, Esq.

New York, 22d Nov., 1806.

My Dear Sir: Our Seminary promises well. I have under my charge eleven young men of exemplary character and respectable minds. Some of them have natural powers which, with due cultivation, will qualify them to adorn any station. I expect a twelfth every hour. This is the only experiment worth naming which has been made in the United States for the vigorous education of the rising ministry. Professorships have been talked of, and in one or two instances founded; but with trifling effect. They have laboured under two evils:—1st. None of them was set up on the only principle of education that can be efficient, viz., the imposing upon youth an absolute necessity of *thinking;* of disciplining their faculties by a strong tension; and of acquiring, if they are capable of acquiring, a habit of close investigation. Every thing was to be done by *lectures*, and you know well what may be expected from that plan. It is admirably calculated to shed a lustre over talents in the teacher; but to be of comparatively little service to the pupils. 2dly. It was no part of previous schemes to *provide for the support of students* who might not be in affluent circumstances. And I affirm, with the utmost confidence, that no proper Seminary can succeed in America without making this one of its principal objects. The greater number by far of those who devote themselves to the pulpit, are from respectable families in the country. At home they feel no want. Their parents and friends have the necessaries and comforts of life within themselves; but there is very little money. The maintenance of a son abroad, especially in a city, requires often more loose cash than would be expended by the whole family at home. The mischief is not to be remedied by placing a Seminary in the country. For exclusively of those reasons which are assigned in the letter annexed to the act of our General Synod, formerly sent you, the utmost that could be accomplished would be a reiteration, not a removal of the grievance. There is, then, no alternative but either to let our youth rush unprepared into the ministry, and our churches, in consequence, fall to destruction; or to meet the expense of a better system. This we have attempted in order to prevent the second evil. The plan of instruction which you have seen, was intended to counteract the first. But, my dear Sir, you have no conception of the difficulties to be encountered. In the midst of abundance throughout our land, it is next to impossible to procure suitable funds. Through the mass of the community, there is comparatively little money circulating. In the cities most of the wealthy are irreligious; and the weight falls upon a few. It might be supposed that denominations professing the same truths, and organized under substantially the same regimen, could obviate the difficulties by uniting their strength. Doubtless they *might* do much. But to such a coalition, while the denominations keep separate, few would consent. I have seen some experiments on that principle, and seen enough to fear that while they are fine things on paper, they are mere mockery in fact. Besides that miserable jealousy, which is the element of little men, and often the infirmity of great men, there are too many managers—there is no energy—there is no *esprit du corps* (without which there is hardly anything to be done in this wayward world)—and the machine would be too unwieldy. The fact is that every denomination has its hands full; and were they all to act with spirit, they would find that they could not press against the barriers which might be supposed to limit their exertions. Let them do what they please, the boundary recedes as they approach, and presents continually new scenes for the warfare of righteousness; new fields of conquest for the Christian banner. On a moderate computation, six thousand ministers of the Gospel will be demanded for the supply of this country in twenty years, exclusively of those who are to occupy places to become vacant in that period. Without something like a miracle, we shall have, ere long, in the bosom of our settlements, the descendants of our own bowels, millions of white heathen, who will be as much objects of Missionary enterprise, as the Hindoos, or the Caffres. And our churches are asleep! My dear Sir, pity and pray for us. The prospect, at times, overwhelms me. It paralyzes my faculties, and weighs down my spirit to the earth. I should die with anguish and despair if I were not occasionally to "remember the years of the right hand of the Most High." All may yet be well. If it shall please God to give a progress answerable to the commencement of our Institution, I shall augur good results. They who treated it at first with indifference, with lightness, with ridicule, and with contempt, begin to look at it now with serious interest. I can perceive a disposition to profit by our example working among other denominations, and cannot help considering the cause of enlightened Christianity as depending to an extent not easily definable, upon the fate of our infant Seminary. My anxiety, therefore, will be pardoned; and my friends will separate it in their estimation from that doating upon some paltry object, and that pruriency of personal eclat, which so often array themselves in the guise of public spirit.

As we cannot go on without revenue, I have put forth my utmost efforts to secure it by setting on foot permanent subscriptions throughout our churches. But it is of prime importance to connect our Institution with fast property. It never will be safe without this. The danger is, that instead of commanding the men who are to direct it, the men will command it; so that it will be an ambulatory contrivance—travelling from place to place, according to the residence of the Professor. It cannot, of course, fail to dwindle into insignificance, and finally to perish. If we shall be able to secure funds adequate to the erection of a respectable building, and the creation of a moderate capital, the proceeds of which may be restricted to a local application, the most certain step will be taken toward the stability of the institution.

My personal share in all this business is extremely laborious. The care of this Seminary, which occupies several hours a day, added to the functions of a numerous congregation—two sermons every Lord's day—catechetical exercises for six or seven months in the year—visiting the sick, &c., with the concern of a heavy family; the weight of all the general business of our churches, and all the avocations attached to a city station, reduce me almost to despondence. Did the situation of my temporal affairs admit of it, I should very speedily—not lay aside preaching the Gospel, which is my glory, but disentangle myself from the details of a congregation. *Deo aliter visum.* God has differently disposed of me, and my affairs. I believe that He has done best; although I should thankfully receive from His providence a partial discharge.

I have been talking to you, my very dear Sir, as if you could enter into all my little matters. Pardon my loquacity. It is a plague of your own inviting. With the most respectful regards to Mrs. Thornton, and the most fervent wishes for your own and your family's prosperity,

I am, dear Sir,
With much affection, yours,
J. M. MASON.

CHAPTER XXII.

1807.

MAGAZINE AND LETTERS.

Christian's Magazine—Letter to Mr. Thornton—Letter to Mrs. Beckley—Letter to Mr. J. M. Duncan—Letter to Mr. Bowyer—Lay Preaching.

THE Christian's Magazine, an influential periodical, edited by Dr. Mason, was commenced in January, 1807. The immediate occasion of it was the publication of certain assaults upon Presbyterian doctrines and polity. Being honestly opposed to the monarchical principle of Church government—and (as truth can afford to smile at unsupported pretensions) being perhaps unnecessarily sensitive to the assumptions and the bearing of an hierarchy which denies to all other denominations of Christians the possession of any valid sacraments or ministry, and which studiously withholds from them the very appellation of *Church*—he felt provoked to a conflict which he could not, he thought, without pusillanimity avoid. Respecting the ability with which it was sustained on his part, there is probably no diversity of opinion on either side.

Immediately upon the appearance of its first number, the magazine made a marked impression on the public mind; and, though unaided by the usual appliances, it obtained a wide circulation. Before the issue of the third number, a new edition of the first two was required. Among the list of subscribers were found prominent names in Great Britain. About one hundred copies were taken at Edinburgh. As, however, the work was almost exclusively dependent upon the Editor for contributions to its pages, and as he had no store previously prepared and laid up for the purpose, but had to draw directly upon his own mind, and frequently to supply "copy" from his pen just as the type-setters called for it, his labours became very oppressive. In a letter to Dr. Gray, of Philadelphia, he says: "I was obliged to prepare the sheets as the types were to be set up." In one to his uncle, at Edinburgh, he says: "Excepting the piece on 'Conscience,' and the 'Christian's Life of Faith,' I was obliged to write the whole of the first number, as my lazy colleagues left me in the lurch, at the very moment when I needed their aid; and it was written page by page, as the printers dunned me for the manuscript." It should be observed, however, that for the last two volumes, the Rev. Dr. John B. Romeyn was associated with him in the editorship, and that the Rev. Dr. Alexander McLeod, besides some reviews, contributed a series of articles on "The Atonement of Christ."

Though he sometimes complained that his brethren had left him to toil alone, and that even a large share of the business drudgery and perplexity of the concern for two years was thrown upon him, he persevered in the labour with steadiness and success, till his main object was accomplished. Most of the articles produced, though only intended for the occasion, are now regarded as of permanent value; and even entire sets of the magazine are still in demand.

His own views in undertaking the publication are thus given in a letter to Mr. Thornton, of London:—"You were kind enough to request any publications of my own. I have but one, a periodical entitled the Christian's Magazine, which, for aught I can tell, it requires some assurance to submit to your perusal. The chief part of the reviewing department has hitherto been devoted to certain publications on the subject of church government. You will there meet, if you should have the curiosity to look at it, with opinions opposed to the divine right of the Episcopal Hierarchy, and these very freely and strongly expressed. But I flatter myself that dissonance of views on this point will not—I am sure *ought* not—to alienate affection among those 'who have obtained like precious faith, through the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.'

Perhaps I owe to my dear and valued Episcopal friends in England an account of my reason for such a work. I do not choose to retreat into that common right of opinion which they as cheerfully grant as they openly take. I had never on this ground entered into the controversy. But it was impossible to avoid it. The press teemed, and the pulpit resounded, with excommunications of all non-episcopal churches — declaring them to be without a ministry, without sacraments, without ordinances—and their members to have no other hope of salvation than what they founded upon the '*uncovenanted mercies of God.*' This was too much. And as some, who walk humbly before God, were in danger of having their peace embittered, it was judged necessary, in vindication of what is infinitely more important than any external order, to put these exclusive doctrines to the test; and that naturally involved the merits of the general question. You have my explanation. That everthing has been written as it ought to have been written, I am far from supposing. Some things, not unworthy the attention of Christians, I hope, the magazine contains. Such as it is, I send it; and shall find no fault if you send me back the severest flagellation for the Presbyterians that England can furnish."

To a brother in the ministry he had previously written:—"It has become necessary to employ measures of defence against the outrages of the Hierarchists. We have long treated them with courtesy, even while they showed no disposition toward an exchange of civilities. But there is a point beyond which concession is dishonour, and to that point matters have now arrived. Treated with contumely from the pulpit and the press; their ministrations branded as impieties and themselves as thieves and robbers; the Presbyterian clergy cannot sit down any longer under Episcopal abuse without at once sacrificing their consciences and authenticating their disgrace. It is not, however, intended so much to wage war against the prelatists, as to establish the Scriptural truth. This seems to be present duty. To pass over the subject of church government, I think a common and sinful omission on the part of evangelical ministers. Laudably bent upon the precious doctrines of the cross, which bear directly upon the sinner's hope, they have insensibly dropped the habit of instructing their flocks in the constitution and arrangements of the Christian Church. This is certainly for a lamentation. It has thrown disrespect upon the Redeemer as king over his holy hill of Zion; and the churches on both sides of the Atlantic are smarting under the effects of their negligence."

During the present year, his tenderest sympathies were again repeatedly called forth by the bereavements of friends. As usual on such occasions, his heart readily flows out in endeavours to comfort the mourners by presenting some of those melting views of death which divine revelation affords. One or two examples will be here given :—

DR. M. TO MRS. MARIA BECKLEY.

New York, 20th April, 1807.

My Dear Madam: A day or two ago, I learned from the papers the affliction with which it has pleased God to afflict you. The sympathy of friends can do very little toward compensating the loss of an affectionate husband, although it brings some soothing balm to the widow's heart. The condolence of this family claims a rank with that of your nearest relatives. But your effectual support and consolation, my sorrowing friend, must spring from another and a higher source. God has declared himself to be "a father of the fatherless, and a husband of the widow." It is your privilege to resort to him as reconciled in Christ Jesus the Redeemer, for all that your bereaved condition may require. "Cast thy fatherless children upon me," is his gracious direction, "I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me." The best thing I can wish for you is, that this stroke upon your earthly comforts may be the occasion of bringing you into close acquaintance and fellowship with the Father of mercies, the God of all consolation. Nothing that we can *lose*, is a fit portion for us. We must have satisfying and *permanent* good. We must have something that will remain young, when we are growing old; something that will increase in life as we approach the embrace of death; something that will multiply its streams of joy, in proportion as the rivulets of earthly pleasure successively dry up; something that will go with us through the grave into the light and purity and glory of that better world; we must have "the *fountain* of life." In Christ Jesus, and in him alone, is it to be found. Seek it there, my afflicted friend, and you shall add one more seal to his promise, "Him that cometh to me, I will *in no wise cast out.*" The season of grief is, in a peculiar manner, the season of mercy. Press then, press hard the mercy-seat, in the confidence that the "God of salvation" will become your own God.

Yours most sincerely,

J. M. MASON.

The next was addressed to a nephew on the death of his father:—

DR. M. TO MR. J. M. DUNCAN.

NEW YORK, 18th April, 1807.

MY DEAR JOHN: Your letters of the 16th, which arrived this morning, have interested us all in your feelings and your affliction. It must be so. "Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live forever?" In removing your parent, God has done that which was good in His eyes, and ought to be so in yours. That your departed father had "hope in his death," is a source of consolation for which your thanks cannot rise too high. I too, my dear John, have lost a father, and under circumstances more touching than your own. I closed not his eyes. I heard not his words of faith and victory. I left him in health, and saw him no more. Then I came back, poor in the world, to a stepmother oppressed with griefs, and to a sister poor like myself. But, my beloved lad, die who may, the "Lord lives." He has been my father and my friend. If you seek Him, he will be yours too. Give yourself away to Him in the Lord Jesus. Cleave, cleave to this gracious Redeemer for your everlasting life. Do it without delay. This is a season in which the Saviour is peculiarly near to you. Cast yourself upon Him, and you shall say, without being put to shame, "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up."

And now, my dear John, remember that new duties devolve upon you. You must do what in you lies to fill up your father's place. See that you show all filial respect to your stepmother. See that you be loving to your brother David, and to the other children; that you behave in an exemplary manner for their imitation; and that you omit nothing in your power toward forwarding their improvement in knowledge, in the fear of God, and in good conduct in the house and out of it. You are old enough to lead the worship of the family. I take it for granted that you will not omit this. "And whatever you do, do it in the name of the Lord Jesus," looking to Him for direction and aid, in the assurance that you shall not look in vain. For myself, I now consider you as, in some measure, one of my own. Consider yourself so, and act accordingly.

Adieu, my nephew. Grace be with you!

Your affectionate uncle,

J. M. MASON.

DR. M. TO R. BOWYER, Esq., LONDON.

NEW YORK, April 27, 1807.

MY DEAR FRIEND: Your long half-angry, half-laughing, but very welcome letter, by Mr. Page, I received on the 20th inst. I account it no small mark of affection for a man three thousand miles off to break up his night's rest in scolding at his absent friend, merely to get something from him, if it be but another scolding. You shall not, as you see, be disappointed. I am not in a humour for *scolding*, and you must be satisfied with merely *something*.

To settle in three words, what your mode of expostulation, if followed up, would extend to three reams—*You are mistaken.* I never entertained the idea that you, or any one else, must go to Glasgow or Aberdeen half a dozen years, before you may venture to speak a word for your Redeemer to your poor fellow-sinners. God forbid! Be your "mouth filled with his praise and his honour all the day." Let every man and woman, every youth and maiden, and little child, whom he has taught to love him, "show forth the honour of his name, and make his praise glorious!" I know not that I have any objection to your Sabbath evening exercises with your rustic villagers, as you have described them. All I intended was to caution you against *taking upon yourself* the office of the ministry. I know how prone your Englishmen are to set up as exhorters; and after their hand is in, to sneak into the employment of public teachers, and commence preachers of the Word. If you go no further than you mention, I will pray God speed. But as to the ministry, my opinion remains unaltered, and I think unalterable. Even the good which men who run without being sent may do, were it much greater than it is, would weigh nothing with me. We are to judge of duty, not from consequences, but from the Divine warrant. God in his sovereignty may overrule the most unwarrantable things for converting sinners and establishing his people. But God's sovereignty is not our rule. Litanies and Liturgies, and holidays, and other exceptionable things, may all be justified on the principle of their having "done good." And if we pursue this argument to its results—that is, if we make the fact of a thing having been useful, the test of its having been agreeable to the Divine will, it must follow, that they whose ministry is successful are called of God, and they whose ministry is unsuccessful are not called of Him. Then consider Rom. x. 21, 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7, with Isa. liii. 1; Christ's own commission would scarcely be valid by this rule. No, my dear friend, when I am looking at a *general principle* which pervades the very essence of the church of Christ, and affects her whole interests in all ages and nations, I am not to have my judgment blinded by an appeal to my feelings; and by pleas drawn from the partial good that may be produced by sacrificing a sound general principle. The soul of one man is as precious as the soul of another. Therefore I never can consent to adopt a plan which may benefit the souls of a score or hundred, at the expense of establishing a precedent which shall hereafter injure the souls of millions. You will, I suppose, smile at my fear, which is very serious, that your loose, superficial, impetuous mode of introducing men into the ministry among your Evangelical Dissenters, will combine eventually, though not designedly, with your carnal hierarchy, in extirpating solid Christianity from your island. This apprehension, derided now, may perhaps be seen to be better founded than many suspect, when the hand that pens these lines, and the eyes which I hope will read them, shall be mouldering in the tomb. I could fill a volume—but I stop.

Ever yours,

J. M. MASON.

CHAPTER XXIII.

1807.

MISSIONARIES FROM LONDON.

Letter from Rev. Dr. Waugh—Letter from Rev. G. Burder—Letter to Robert Patterson, Esq.—Letter to Mr. Hardcastle—Letter to Rev. David Dickson—Tokens for the Communion withdrawn from Mr. and Mrs. Gordon—Mr. Bethune resolves to leave the connexion—Dr. Mason's Remonstrance.

The following two letters of introduction are of more than ordinary interest, not only on account of the information which they furnish, but on account of an incident soon to be noticed and the character of all concerned. Especially must Morrison's name always stand high on the roll of those who have benefited their race:—

TO DR. J. M. MASON.

Salisbury Place, Mary-le-Bone,
London, Jan. 12, 1807.

My Dear Doctor: I take the liberty of introducing to your friendly notice the bearer, the Rev. Robert Morrison, our Missionary to Canton. He is an excellent young man for piety and solid parts. He is a member of our church, and by his devout and prudent conduct, has very much endeared himself to my heart. He has had his education at Hoxton and Gosport; and for more than a year has been under the care of a Chinese gentleman in London, for acquiring the language. Any attentions you show him will, I believe, be well-pleasing to God, and gratifying to your numerous missionary friends in London.

Your letter has done my heart good. Write so to me always, and I shall bless you when I die.

I have resumed the charge of my dear people, and earnestly crave an interest in your prayers, that my fidelity and perseverance to life's end, may form some suitable acknowledgment to my Divine Lord for his tender mercy in restoring me again to his service. I remain with much esteem,

My dear brother, most truly yours,

ALEX. WAUGH.

TO DR. J. M. MASON.

LONDON, Jan. 26, 1807.

DEAR SIR: Your favour of March 11, 1805, is before me. I am ashamed that it has not been acknowledged long before this; but the great multiplicity of your own engagements will cause you to make the best apology for my delay; for indeed, like you, I have far too much to do.

I thank you for your candid sentiments, respecting the revivals of religion in the West. It is necessary to think and speak with caution respecting them. Tares will be found among the wheat; the enemy will not fail to sow them.

Permit me to introduce to your friendly regard, the Rev. Mr. Morrison, who is going to Canton. He is a very worthy young man. He has been studying the Chinese language, and goes to China to perfect himself in it, with a view to the translation of the Holy Scriptures.

Two other worthy Missionaries, intended for India—the Rev. Messrs. Lee and Gordon—with their wives, accompany him. It was thought best to send them by the way of America. Any good offices which you can render them, will be gratefully acknowledged by the Missionary Society in London, and will, I trust, be acceptable to Him whose they are, and whom they serve.

We shall be happy to hear what is doing by your Missionary Society. Let me hear from you, dear Sir, as soon as you can find opportunity.

Believe me your affectionate brother,

GEO. BURDER.

DR. M. TO ROBERT PATTERSON, Esq. PHILADELPHIA.

NEW YORK, April 24, 1807.

MY DEAR SIR: I do you and myself the pleasure of introducing to your acquaintance the Rev. Messrs. Morrison and Gordon, missionaries from the London Missionary Society to the East Indies. The cause of their coming to this country in order to take shipping to the places of their destination, is the difficulty of getting out directly from Britain; as the East India Company have shown a reluctance to encourage the spreading of the Gospel among the poor Heathen in and near their territories. Now, my dear Sir, the object of this letter is to solicit from you an act of solid service, which, if in your power, as I hope it is, I know you will very gladly perform. It is to assist the Missionaries in getting recommendations from mercantile houses in your city to their friends in the East; as this will be of special importance in facilitating their efforts and rendering them externally comfortable. For Mr. Morrison, it is indispensable that he obtain a pretty strong introduction to the American consulate at Canton. As all strangers must be ranged under some national banner, and as he cannot expect any countenance from the British agents, his only resort is to attach himself to the American flag, that he may be permitted to reside in the factory. Would not a few lines from the General Government be of material advantage to him? Can you not without difficulty procure this favour? Or *if there be* difficulty in the case, can you not procure it? On such an occasion, I trust, we shall not be checked by anything that we can surmount. Mr. Morrison's object is to acquire the language of the Chinese with a view to compile a Dictionary of that extraordinary tongue, as subservient to a translation of the Holy Scriptures. Business of a mechanical, commercial or political sort, he has none. He has already made some progress in the knowledge of the Chinese, and has submitted to the labour of transcribing a dictionary containing 10,000 words. Of his character, and the characters of his companions, you may give the most favourable account without the least hesitation. Their letters to us are such as to command the most implicit confidence in their purity, their integrity, their disinterested zeal for the name of our divine Redeemer, "who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood." Is not this enough to set our hearts in motion, and our hands at work, to help them on? Introduce them to Dr. Gray, and others who may be useful to them. Sincerely yours,

J. M. MASON.

DR. M. TO MR. HARDCASTLE, LONDON.

New York, April 27th, 1807.

My Dear Friend: I heard with much concern by Mr. Page that your health had for some time been impaired. I trust the Lord, the healer, will be to you as he has been in times past, your refuge and strength, your very present help in trouble.

Our missionary friends, Mr. Morrison, and Messrs. Gordon and Lee, with their wives, landed at this place on Monday, the 20th inst., after a very uncomfortable passage of 79 days. We are refreshed to see men and women who have enough of the spirit of martyrdom to forego all for the sake of their Divine Redeemer. May he bless them and keep them! and prosper them in the way in which they go. Mr. and Mrs. Lee joined with us yesterday in commemorating our Lord's death. Mr. Morrison, with Mr. and Mrs. Gordon, set out for Philadelphia on Friday. Letters which they brought for that place, and the importance of mercantile introductions, rendered that visit altogether expedient. Nothing shall be wanting on our part to procure them the most efficient patronage. Mr. M. has the prospect of a passage in a vessel to sail from this port for Canton in a fortnight. The other brethren may be detained longer. There is nothing of the loiterer about them. Mr. M. set about his business the moment his foot was on shore, and pushes it with the ardour of one whose soul is in his work.

I much regret that my leaving the city to-morrow for three weeks will hinder my personal efforts in behalf of the brethren. But my lack of service will be abundantly supplied by our friend Bethune and others. Whatever moneys may be wanted for the missionaries will be advanced without hesitation.

I beg you to make my excuse to Mr. Burder for not writing him at this time, as I am extremely pressed with business.

Yours with much affection,

J. M. MASON.

As has already more than once appeared, Dr. Mason had a very high regard for Mr. Bethune, son-in-law of the venerable Mrs. Isabella Graham. At various times, he received from him important favours which were always readily acknowledged and in various ways cordially reciprocated. In his foreign correspondence he often found occasion to speak of him with much affection. Once for all, and for a reason which will soon b seen, we give an extract in which he expresses his feelings in his own warm and striking manner. It is from a letter addressed to the Rev. David Dickson, Sen., of Edinburgh, in which, as he was often called to do, he gave, for the benefit of poor relatives, such information as he had been able to search out respecting an individual who had died in New York. He then adds, "His watch, my friend Mr. Bethune carries with him for the eldest son. Mr. B. knew something of Mr. McK., and can probably supply what I may have omitted. I beg leave, my dear Sir, to associate you with myself in the happiness of a personal acquaintance with this gentleman. His good sense, urbane manners, and extensive information render him a valuable addition to the few with whom we wish to be intimate; and his very active and exemplary piety will endear him to all who love that blessed name which is above every name. Precious beyond all temporal interests, is that communion which unites the living members with the living head. Be these the brethren of my affection; dearer than they 'who sucked the breasts of my mother!' I desire my life, my death, my body, my soul, my time, my eternity, to be with them."

We now come to a startling incident, closely connected with several of the esteemed names mentioned above, which deeply wounded the feelings of Dr. Mason, and many Christian friends in New York, and perhaps of none so much as Mr. Bethune. It should be observed that by this time, the Second Associate Reformed Church had become separated from the First, and had a pastor to themselves. Mr. Bethune, at the special instance of Dr. Mason, had united with them, and become one of the Elders. A sacramental occasion occurring some time after the arrival of the three missionaries, who had come so highly recommended, and who were intimately associated with Mr. Bethune, the latter procured for Mr. and Mrs. Gordon, tokens for admission to the Lord's table, (according to a Scotch custom)—a privilege which they had already enjoyed in the First Church. After this, some, in their zeal for strictness of order and discipline, must needs call the Session together for the purpose of reviewing the procedure, and reconsidering the propriety of what had been done. At this meeting of the Session, it was actually determined to take back the tokens which had been given, and thus debar these foreign Christians from a privilege to which they had been invited. This decision could not touch Mr. Morrison, as he was a member of Dr. Waugh's church in London; but it laid the ban upon the other two, Messrs. Lee and Gordon, with their partners, who were equally estimable, and equally well recommended. This extraordinary measure gave such a shock to the sensibilities of a heart so tender and generous as that of Mr. Bethune, that he resolved at once to separate himself from a fellowship in which such things could be tolerated. Before doing it, however, he gave an intimation of his purpose to his esteemed friend and former Pastor. This drew forth a powerful remonstrance, which is of sufficient interest to be here inserted at length, and which was succeeded by a change in Mr. Bethune's purpose.

Before inserting this paper, it may be desirable to see what was the state of Dr. Mason's mind on the occurrence, as expressed in a letter to a friend:—"We have news and revolutions since you left us. Mr. F.'s Session refused to admit Mr. and Mrs. Gordon to the Lord's table! and obliged poor Bethune to take back the tokens which they had actually received on Friday evening! You may easily judge of B.'s feelings, and of my own. From the friends of these worthy missionaries, did I get the most profuse Christian civilities, and our church liberal donations to her public fund. Here we are talking at our firesides about evangelizing the Heathen—we are praising those who consecrate themselves to the glorious work—are giving thanks to our ascended Master for putting his Spirit within them, and exciting them to such arduous services—we are praying for his presence and blessing upon them—and treating them, at the same time, like Heathen men and Publicans!! But mark the consequence. This foolish, unwarrantable, and unchristian conduct threw the spark into the powder, which had been long collecting in the bosom and family of Bethune, and had nearly blown them out of our communion altogether. But that mortification has been prevented. A remonstrance which I addressed to my friend, had the desired effect. He was absolutely resolved to quit the new church; and he has resumed his seat in Cedar street."

The remonstrance referred to above now follows:—

DR. M. TO MR. BETHUNE.

GREENWICH, 30th Sept., 1807.

MY FRIEND AND BROTHER: "My friend and brother" in holier bonds than those of flesh and blood, what shall I say? or how give vent to the emotions which agitate my heart?—On returning last evening from the city, my eye caught upon the scrutoir, a letter addressed to me in your handwriting. I took it up with those pleasurable anticipations which always accompany the receipt of communications from you. I opened it—But my disappointment! Oh, how cruel! All the external ties of religious connexion snapped asunder—all the communion arising from our being members of the same ecclesiastical family, renounced! abruptly renounced! renounced without a warning! I could scarcely believe my senses. But it is even so. The last man from whom I could have expected *such* a blow, the first to inflict it! I called on you last evening to disburden my heart. You were not at home. I have perused and re-perused your distressing letter. I have spread it out before Him who is not unknown to you as the "wonderful counsellor," and I now submit to you the best judgment which I have been able to form. Summarily it is this, that the step which you have taken in withdrawing from the body, is so far from appearing evidently proper to my mind, that all my perceptions of truth and duty compel me to *condemn it, as altogether improper and unwarrantable.*

My reasons are manifold, and, I think, cogent. I cannot detail them at length, for I should write a volume instead of a letter. Take the outlines:—

Be the cause of your departure ever so valid in itself, your *acting upon it* was too precipitate to be just or scriptural. A note from Mr. F. on "*Saturday evening,*" "demanded, on your part, a serious inquiry into your situation as a member in communion with a church professing such sentiments," viz., as were expressed in that note. The next day was the communion Sabbath; in the course of that day and Monday, amidst the avocations too, as I suppose, (although *that* is a mere circumstance) of your official and commercial occupations—in the course of that day, and Monday, with Saturday evening, the inquiry is instituted, prosecuted, closed; and *on Tuesday* a formal message is communicated to your own pastor, and myself, not stating a grievance which ought to be redressed, but announcing your resolution of withdrawing from the communion of your church! Really, my friend Bethune, this is a rapid work. Can you review it calmly and coolly, and say it was *right?* Was the question of so little moment as to be unworthy of a revision after your first impressions? Could you, or could truth, have lost anything by taking a week or two to deliberate? Was not something more due to the feelings of your brethren? to the solemnity of your engagements? to the general principles of religious order? to the character of the body at large? nay, even to those very prejudices which are driving you away? Indeed, indeed, it is all wrong. It was not *thus* that the first Seceders left the Scottish establishment; nor the English Dissenters, their hierarchy; nor the Protestants the church of Rome; although their reasons were incomparably stronger and more urgent than your own. You have done what you ought not to have done, and have often disapproved in others. You have sanctioned, by your example, which will not fail to be recorded and quoted, that causless and *hasty* desertion of church fellowship which is a dishonour to the Christian name, and a bane to the Christian interest. You may not be conscious of it, but I very much fear that *excited feeling* has had no inconsiderable share in producing your present measures. You would be apathy itself not to have felt; and your departure, *following so very closely* an incident which probably filled you, as it did me, with indignation and shame, throws an air of *irritation* upon your conduct; and as the *fervour* of your mind is well undersood, it will be hard to persuade those whose opinion you value the most, that you have been guided in this matter by your judgment and conscience *alone.* Nay, my brother, were your reasons such as would even *require* your withdrawing *ultimately,* there is nothing to justify your *haste;* and the Lord will not bless it.

But what are your reasons? I own that I feel a glow of satisfaction when I enter upon them, as they afford me a hope that the Rubicon may be repassed.

You view the dissatisfaction with your attentions to our worthy missionary friends, and their occasional fellowship with us in the commemoration of our Lord's death, as belonging to the sentiments and principles of the Associate Reformed Church. If it were so, if she avowed any principle which should exclude from her Christian communion, the followers and servants of her glorious Master, I too would forsake her. I would have forsaken her long ago, had she imposed so unhallowed a term of communion. But this is not the fact; and I wonder how *you* should have fallen into such a mistake. Look at the chapter in the confession of faith on "the communion of saints," and after seeing that communion defined, you will read that it is to be extended, as God affordeth opportunity, "to all them who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both theirs and ours." I quote from memory, as I have not the book at hand, but I believe I am correct. This is the *only doctrine*, these the *only principles*, on that subject, which I know as belonging to the Associate Reformed Church. Nor is there one of her acts which breathes a contrary spirit. In that little instrument, called "the Constitution of the Associate Reformed Synod," which was drawn up at her formation in 1782, there is a provision of this general tenor, that to prevent the uneasiness which, in a divided state of the church, might arise from the indiscreet application of her doctrine of communion, her members deemed themselves bound to submit to such restrictions of their liberty as general edification should require. This provision, 1st, asserts the *principle* laid down in the confession: 2d, maintains Christian *liberty* in reference to that principle: and 3d, professes a willingness to abridge the *use* of that liberty, in condescension to the weakness of some, in precaution against the rashness of others, and in order to promote the edification of all. Is not this exactly as it should be? Is it not treading precisely in the steps of the Apostle Paul, who yielded his liberty in those very points to which he never would have submitted had they been presented to him as terms of communion to bind his conscience? Afterwards, in an overture for illustrating the doctrines of the confession, published in 1787, with the *approbation of the Synod* as to its substance, those miserable, contracted notions of church fellowship which have so justly offended you, are *expressly refuted.* There have, it is true, been several attempts in past years, to make the Associate Reformed Church *narrow* her ground. But with what effect? They have uniformly failed. Every succeeding attempt was more confined and feeble than the former; they gradually died away. They were buried at Greencastle in 1799, when the whole constitution and standards of the Associate Reformed Church were definitively and exclusively adopted: and no one has since been foolish enough to aim at reviving them. It is, therefore, a very great error to suppose that those sentiments and principles which seem to have so many advocates in the Session and congregation of Mr F., are the sentiments and principles of our church. Your avowed cause of separation, then, has *no existence.*

I am not ignorant that the views of many private members, with *here and there* a minister of our communion, are such as you attribute, erroneously, to the *body.* I have had too much trouble, and suffering, to be ignorant of it. But this was always considered as a matter of forbearance on our part. It never broke up fellowship except with some who would not join in the Christian compromise, and who left us on account of our *Latitudinarianism!!* Hard case, truly! If one brother run away because our doors are too *wide*, and another because they are too *narrow!* The number of those whose views on Christian communion are so unhappily contracted, among us, is very small in proportion to the mass; is daily growing less, and in a little time will be extinct. It is confined almost entirely to members directly from the old countries; of this number, too, such as would be pertinacious and troublesome, are a very trifling proportion. I give no credit to the pretended *magnitude* of the discontent. I have seen such things before, and have seen them dwindle down into almost nothing. It is an easy thing to make a noise. The captious and conceited raise their cry; the ignorant and the timid join it, and cry yet louder. Inexperience is appalled; her chafed imagination hears the roaring of a lion in the croaking of a frog. I design these remarks for those who are soon frightened, and who, imparting their panic to their neighbours, help on the alarm. Yet, nothing is more inconstant, irregular, and cowardly; nothing more beneath the fear of a man endued with rational, not to say Christian fortitude; nothing more easily resisted, nor more certainly quelled, by a firm and temperate disregard of them, than these little riots of prejudice, these petty insurrections of vanity and querulousness.

But allowing to the obnoxious "sentiments" all the actual influence which you ascribe to them, can they, even then, vindicate your thus withdrawing from the body? I think not.

In the first place, it is no slight evil that will justify the disruption of church ties, at any time. Some corruptions there must be in doctrine, worship, or order, of so atrocious a nature as absolutely to pollute the conscience; or something so entirely destructive of personal edification as not to be remedied, to free a retreating member from the charge of schism. Speak I this as a man? or saith not the Scripture the same also? Read, at your leisure, the New Testament injunctions and precedents, and I am sure you will coincide with me. What reason, but some such, can absolve church members from their obligations? or revoke their plighted faith? Say, now, my friend: say as before Him with whom you are accustomed to walk, whether the facts before us furnish such a case. There is no sinful term of communion offered to you; for the thing to which you object never was a term of communion, nor is among the principles recognized by the Associate Reformed Church. It is nothing more than the private scruples of some whom you love in the Lord; and the private notions of some who are much too pharisaical in their attachment to peculiarities of denomination. The utmost that is asked from you, even according to your own representation of facts, is a retrenchment of your *liberty* on a particular point which seldom occurs; which may not occur again, under equally interesting circumstances, during your whole life. But what does your present conduct declare? Nothing less than this, that your individual sense of Christian liberty shall be gratified to the uttermost, or you will break off from your church. Can any church under heaven last one year, if such be the maxims of her members? "The prejudices are unreasonable, they are unscriptural; they militate against that 'love to the brethren' which we are commanded to cultivate; they tend to cherish the dangerous error of laying the weight of Christian character upon mere externals." Be it so! But the same objection holds to associating with any whose infirmities are not sinless. They all tend in one way or other to injure the truth and impair the order of God's word. What then? Is an opinion, not affecting immediately the vitals of Christianity, but in our apprehension unscriptural and of inauspicious effect, never to be a matter of forbearance? Is your trial any thing like that of the early believers on whom there was an attempt to impose an unlawful term of communion? "Except ye be circumcised and keep the law of Moses, ye cannot be saved." The Apostles and elders at Jerusalem did not settle this question by advising all who opposed the Judaizing Christians, to desert their fellowship and go over to the Gentile part of the church. Was there not a mighty clamour raised about the distinction of meats? yet the apostle, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, quieted it, not by directing those who had too much light to keep up the distinction to withdraw from their mistaken brethren, but to curtail their own liberty; to let their faith on these subjects be their consolation before God. The same was done in the case of the Jewish, refusing to communicate with the Gentile, Christians. This was not admitted as a reason for those of the former who were better instructed going away from their less instructed brethren; but it was a very good reason for *remaining* in their communion, and contributing to their emancipation from an error about the genius of the evangelical dispensation. I am not able to discern the difference between the *principle* of their situation and your own; and therefore, must say that your separation is unscriptural and unwarrantable.

So far as I know, I would probably go all the lengths on that subject which you would deem proper. My sentiments on it are no secret; at least I have never attempted to conceal them; but, notwithstanding, I have for more than fourteen years, that is, during the whole of my ministry, submitted to the most painful and mortifying restrictions of my liberty, that I might not lay a stumbling-block in the way of my brother, nor mar my own usefulness in the Church of God. I look back, with a good conscience and with much thankfulness, that I was enabled to put up with the restraint which you now throw from you. I the more wonder at you, because you have certainly, for a succession of years, endured for the truth's sake, and for the profit of many, much greater "hardness" than that from which you now shrink.

In the next place, were the evil of which you complain as momentous as your letter represents it, you cannot, with the authority of Christ to support you, withdraw till you have tried all reasonable means of removing it. You have no right to retire quietly, and leave your brethren under what appears to you sinful. I am no advocate for a contentious spirit; but a Christian cannot exonerate his conscience without endeavouring, in his place, to keep or take sin from the church as well as from his brother. Your duty, if you continue of the opinion that the "sentiments" you explode are among the principles of the Associate Reformed Church, unquestionably was, first to lay your difficulty affectionately and respectfully before the proper judicatory, and if you received no satisfaction, to have asked for a release from their connexion. But you have taken the business into your own hand; you have first proclaimed your withdrawing from your church, and then demanded a certificate of your standing. These things ought not so to be. You have acted, my friend, in this particular, without your wonted circumspection. You have taken upon yourself to decide a question in which the Church of God is a party, without so much as giving her an opportunity to set her reasonings over against yours. Therefore your separation, under its actual circumstances, cannot be justified.

In the *third* place, if you shall examine the matter closely, you will perceive that you have done the very thing for which you condemn others. They are not willing to receive into their communion persons who are not of their own denomination, and whose ideas of public order are not consonant with their own; and you refuse to keep your communion with those who, in your eyes, are not correct as to the *extent* of the communion of saints in the Church visible. They would tear themselves from your communion for admitting our Christian brethren; and you would tear yourself from their communion for not admitting them. As neither of you will pretend that the *essence* of Christianity is involved in the debate, I cannot see the difference between your spirits. The one is just as much to blame as the other, or rather the weight of the argument is on their side, and the weight of the blame on yours. You acknowledge that the Presbyterian form of church government has a Divine sanction. The difficulty with many truly spiritual is this, whether every act, even of occasional communion, does not involve the consideration of the Church as a visible organized society, and consequently, a reciprocal approbation of each other's order. They think that it does; I am satisfied that it does not; and therefore with me it is an affair of liberty, and so it is with you. Now, whatever be your opinion at present, you will find upon a close inspection, that there are much tougher and more puzzling arguments on the side of their objection, than can possibly be mustered in vindication of your asserting your *liberty* with so high a tone as to break your church connexion rather than yield it. If you carry your principle through, seeing it conflicts with *individual* scruple, and not with *public* profession, you would never, hereafter, admit to the same sacramental table with yourself, any one who had not freedom to *renounce* all his predilections for that particular restraint which you cannot away with. For the reason which will justify you in withdrawing from him, will equally justify you in refusing to let him draw nigh to you. And then, I ask, whether you will not have completely changed places? "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, who thus judgest, for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou thyself that judgest, doest the same things."

Having briefly reviewed your separation as a matter of *right*, I must beg your patience while I solicit you to look at it with me, as a matter of *expedience*. I do not insinuate that anything wrong can be expedient; but as the question of expediency is often auxiliary to the question of right, and, *where there are no antecedent obligations*, may absolutely determine it, it cannot be amiss to inquire whether the step, now under discussion, was directed by that "wisdom which dwells with prudence."

1. It is always a hazardous thing for a man past five and

thirty to change his habits. Unless he has previously laboured under such impediments to a sound judgment as will be of excuse, his transactions weaken people's confidence in his understanding, his stability, and his integrity. It is no easy thing for him to replace cords which for a dozen years of the most susceptible time of his life, have wound themselves around his heart. You are a personal witness that one of the effects of the Tabernacle in Scotland, has been to unsettle connexions thoroughly fixed, and throw hundreds of serious people as a sort of religious vagabonds upon the community. You ought, therefore, to have most imperious reasons for your changing, both on your own account, and on account of the example you are setting to others.

2. Is there any probability of your being as useful in any other connexion as in your present? I mean your connexion with the body. Your acquaintance with human nature will tell you that no stranger coming into any *regulated* community, can expect the same confidence to be reposed in him as in those whom they have *tried.* Years must roll away before you can get that confidence; and it will always be hampered with the recollection that it was reposed in you by another body, and that you suddenly deserted them. Whatever be the pitiful carpings of individuals, you certainly know, and if *you* do not, *I* do, that there is no individual of your age among the laity on whom more reliance is placed in regard to all great questions, than on yourself. It is at least problematical whether you ever gain so much among other connexions. I speak not out of disrespect to you, but according to the usual course of human affairs. You, at any rate, surrender a certain for an uncertain usefulness.

3. Are you sure that you will not eventually *injure* the Missionary cause by that very step in which you intend to show your affection for it? You have not forgotten that one of the most formidable obstacles in its way arose from the fear that it tends to break down individual denominations. And now you, than whom no man more strenuously discouraged that idea, nor embarked more heartily in Missionary plans, support that objection by your own deed, because you break with your own congregation, for not giving up what many of them think are their proper peculiarities, in order to accommodate some of the

foreign Missionaries. I do not say that this is sound reasoning; but that it is plausible, and ought not to be called up, if it can be avoided.

4. Have you weighed all the consequences which may proceed from discussions originating in this step of yours? I cannot trace them. Some of them may be delicate; some vexatious, without any equivalent for the vexation.

Upon the whole, it is clear to me that you have been rash, and have entered into temptation. Our Missionary friends are strange Christians, very different from my hope of them, if they could not be induced, after proper explanations, to bear with the untoward conduct of a church, without other sentiments than those of regret. They will not, I am persuaded, think contemptuously of those whose views cannot meet their own; well knowing that the liberality of some sections of Christians is as much the effect of mere habit, and has as little to do with enlightened principle, as the contractedness of others.

I shall probably be awkwardly situated. Had I anticipated any uproar, I should have done as I always did before, sacrifice my liberty; and endeavoured to conciliate my missionary friends. But having exercised only a recognized right, and enforced one of our own principles of communion, under circumstances not marked with imprudence, I shall not, most assuredly, retract nor recede. I can waive rights, but not relinquish principle. Of this, then, I *personally* complain, that you abandon me at the time when you ought, in a common warfare, to have linked your efforts and your destiny with my own, as I should have done with yours. But no matter. If I must again come into the field, I have no objection. If I go, I must be *swept away;* no man shall accuse me of retiring before the swelling torrent. My God assisting me, I shall breast the stream and buffet the wave while I have an atom of strength remaining.

Other things in abundance crowd upon me—but I stop. The dispensation is mysterious. To me, however, *individually*, it addresses a language which I am at no loss to interpret. I have had my idols. My *political* idol was cut down in a way which fills me with an anguish and a horror that time has not diminished. If I had idols in religious friends, I had them in the family of that dear woman whose gray hairs are going with sorrow to the grave. My towering spirit needed to be brought down, and my bursting heart entreats that it may be brought down most effectually; anything that shall teach me to live like a little child in implicit confidence upon my Father in heaven.

What is the aspect of this providence toward you, I presume not to conjecture; but that there is a rod in it, I am sure.

A short note, recalling your yesterday's determination, is all that I desire in writing; if indeed, I shall be so happy as to receive such an one. Further communications I wish to be verbal, as I have no leisure for protracted correspondence, nor any conviction of its utility.

I leave the whole affair with the Lord. If he shall permit it to keep the course which it has begun, I shall, notwithstanding appearances, have good cause to praise him; for he is the health of my countenance and my God.

In this faith my grieved spirit finds consolation. And I rejoice that whatever ties be broken, there are everlasting ties by which I am, most affectionately, yours, &c.,

J. M. MASON.

CHAPTER XXIV.

1808.

CONGREGATIONAL LIBRARIES JOURNEY THROUGH NEW ENGLAND, AND LETTERS.

Congregational Libraries—Letter from H. Thornton, Esq., London—Church at Kingston—Letter to Dr. Stevens—Gen. Hamilton—Letter to E. Mason, Edinburgh—Letter to Mrs. Smart—Letter to Mrs. A. Gibson—Letter to Rev. A. Waugh, London—Letter to Rev. A. Hunter, Edinburgh—Letter to Rev. Geo. Burder, London—Letter to Mr. Hardcastle, London—Letter to Mr. J. Norris—Pulpit Eloquence—Letter to Rufus King, Esq.—Reply—Letter from Rev. Moses Stuart—Letter from Geo. Cabot, Esq., Boston—Reply.

At the meeting of the Synod in 1808, Dr. Mason, from a committee appointed for the purpose, presented a bill for the "Institution of Congregational Libraries," which, with some amendments was adopted. It is another proof of the earnestness with which he was intent upon promoting the great interests of religion through well qualified ministers. The reason and object of this act are sufficiently expressed in its preamble and first section:—

"The ministers and elders in General Synod convened, taking into their serious consideration the difficulties and discouragements which ministers in general experience in prosecuting the studies required of them by the word of God and by the nature of their office, from the want of those literary helps which are indispensable to the intelligent and profitable discharge of their duties; desirous of removing the impediment which is thereby given to the progress of pure and enlightened Christianity; and perceiving this important object to be unattainable while access to valuable and necessary books is to be procured only at the private expense of ministers:

"Do hereby direct and ordain, that it be and it hereby is, recommended to all the congregations, settled and vacant, under their care, to make an annual contribution for the purpose of purchasing a library, which shall be the property of the congregation, and shall be appropriated to the use of their minister or ministers for the time being."

Then follows a detailed plan for selecting, preserving, and perpetuating such libraries, which needs not to be further noticed than to say that it involved a provision, whose operation added not inconsiderably to the amount of his own labours in the station where Providence had placed him.

At this meeting there was reported a donation to the Seminary from Mr. Henry Thornton, of London, accompanied by a characteristic letter from the donor:—

TO DR. MASON.

London, Jan. 19, 1808.

Dear Sir: Contemplating the magnitude of your object and the reasonableness of your views, I cannot allow myself to forbear from rendering you some assistance. I write, therefore, now to say that you are welcome to draw on me for one hundred pounds, sterling, some part of which I hope to recover from Mr. Wilberforce, and possibly another friend or two. I must not at present pledge myself for the time to come. I will however, if it please God, again think upon your plans a twelvemonth hence. In the meantime, I wish you all success in endeavouring to promote the interests of the Gospel of peace in this perturbed world, as indeed one of the best means of laying that fierce spirit which so lamentably prevails. I grieve to see that America and England seem so ill to understand each other. Surely the strides towards universal dominion made and making by the present master of the continent of Europe ought to unite all the friends of liberty, and of the independence of nations.

But I will not enter into the present topics of political discussion. I have not indeed as yet made up my own mind upon them in every particular. But the Parliament in general will doubtless support the minister; and the importance of what are here considered to be our naval rights, and among these, the right of retaliating on our enemy by a conduct generally analogous to that which our enemy observes on the ocean, is strongly felt by our Independent members.

May I trouble you, in drawing your bill, to add £1 9*s.* to it, and to pay that sum to any representative of Mr. Jonathan Mason, of New York or Boston, with whom I formerly had an account, if you can conveniently find such person. I would beg you to give this trifle in charity, if it is troublesome to find the owner. The sum by accident was not drawn for by Mr. Mason, and there is a correctness, even in these small matters, which it is useful to observe.

I am, dear Sir,
Your very obedient friend and servant,
HENRY THORNTON.

Fourteen students had attended the Seminary during the previous term, and had been examined on the Old and New Testaments in their original languages, and on their other studies, and approved by the Board of Superintendents.

Its fruits and promise had at this time already attracted attention beyond the bounds of the denomination which had established it. This accounts for the fact that a letter was sent to the Professor, Feb. 1, 1808, by the Consistory of the Dutch Church at Kingston, Ulster county, for a candidate. Of this letter, we subjoin the principal part:—

"DEAR SIR: Upon an application of the Congregation of our Dutch Church in this town, the Consistory have resolved that application be made to you, Sir, for the recommendation of a suitable and proper person, being a candidate for the ministry, and duly licensed to preach the Gospel in the English language, as an Assistant in the Divine service with Mr. Doll, our present Pastor, whose service is altogether in the Dutch language:

"In pursuance of such resolution, we beg leave to trouble you for your aid in procuring for our Congregation such suitable person as you may deem proper for the promotion of the Gospel among us, a young man, well educated, of good abilities, and professing sound doctrine, according to the order and the fundamental principles of our Reformed Church; and such as you may think proper to address to us, will meet with welcome reception in our congregation."

This communication was signed in behalf of the Consistory by

George J. L. Doll, V. D. M., and Solomon Hasbrouck, Senior Elder.

It thus happened that a candidate for the ministry from the New York Seminary visited the place, and gave, it is believed, universal satisfaction; yet on account of more urgent calls elsewhere, he could not settle among them. Subsequently, however, the place was supplied by another licentiate from the Associate Reformed Church.

Applications of a similar nature were also at different times made to Dr. Mason by other churches in the Dutch connexion.

Some time after the death of General Hamilton, Dr. Mason was induced to undertake a Biography of him. In search of materials, he had occasion from time to time to write letters to gentlemen who were supposed to be in possession of important facts. In some of these he gives expression to his ideas of what such a work should be. An instance we have at this period in a letter to one of Hamilton's early frends:—

DR. M. TO DR. STEVENS.

New York, February 27, 1808.

Dear Sir: Although I have not the honour of being known to you personally, yet the subject of this letter will, I hope, be a sufficient apology for obtruding myself upon your notice.

By the desire of his widow, and with the approbation of his most intimate friends, I have ventured upon the arduous task of writing the life of General Hamilton. I feel what boldness there is in such an attempt; and am not insensible to the immense disparity between the powers of that transcendent man and those of his biographer. That the work shall be what every one who had the happiness of his acquaintance would wish it to be, a perfect portrait of himself, I am far from the vanity of supposing. Nor can it be rationally expected, as it would require a second Hamilton. But whatever can be accomplished by a diligent investigation of the facts, by a scrupulous regard to truth, by a most affectionate devotedness to his memory, and by an endeavour, according to the talent employed, to infuse into the picture so much resemblance to the original as shall render it not altogether unworthy the acceptance of his friends, I do not feel it ostentatious to promise.

All the papers left behind him are now in my possession. I have assurances of whatever aid it shall be in the power of his most confidential friends to afford. Mr. King, Mr. G. Morris, Mr. Walcott, who succeeded him as Secretary of the Treasury, have had the goodness to interest themselves in procuring me every facility within their reach. A principal defect is found in the materials for the history of his early life. Understanding that you have probably the most copious and authentic information, in relation to this period, I have taken the liberty, at the suggestion of Mrs. Hamilton, to solicit a communication of such facts as may appear to you deserving of a place in the contemplated work. It is with reluctance that I make a request which cannot be acceded to without some trouble. If compliance shall be compatible with your convenience and your sense of propriety, I shall esteem it a particular favour.

Desirous of discharging the duties of my engagement in a manner as satisfactory and honourable as possible, I have resolved and stipulated that no restriction shall be laid upon me with respect to time. The *nonum prematur in annum*, is a precept not to be dispensed with by works which are to have either great utility, or permanent reputation. Frequent revision, and much of the *limæ labor* are due, not more to the importance of the undertaking, than to the memory of our friend. It is therefore intended and agreed, that the public shall know nothing of the work during the course of preparation. Prudential considerations, which it is not necessary to enumerate, require that it be mentioned to those only (and they are few) who can render substantial aid. On this ground, I trust you will not deem it improper to view my letter as confidential. With great respect, I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

J. M. MASON.

By his friend, Mr. Bethune, who was about to sail for England, Dr. Mason enjoyed an excellent opportunity for writing to his British friends. He accordingly prepared a large packet of letters, some of which furnish links in the chain of events, and all of which are illustrative of his character. Parts of a few of them are here presented:—

DR. M. TO MR. MASON, EDINBURGH.

New York, 8th April, 1808.

My Dear Uncle: An incidental paragraph in a letter of Nov. 12th from Mr. Hall, and received the other day, is the only account of the affliction wherewith God has been pleased to visit you in the death of my aunt. I was struck, but not surprised. Her frame has been wearing away for years; and nothing has happened but what, I suppose, you had long though silently anticipated. Yet the severing of the heart-strings is sore; and the pangs incurable nearly in proportion to the length of time which has strengthened all the habits of affection. I mingle my tears with yours. We mourn, but not as those who have no hope. It is our Father in heaven who smites; and his chastisements are administered with rods taken from the tree of life. Would I were near you in your bereaved state. But why? He "whose loving-kindness is better than life," is your "refuge and strength, your very present help in trouble." Praised be his name, that his chastenings are not curses! Praised be his name, that he calls us to drink of no cup which his grace does not, sooner or later, make a "cup of blessing." Our hope is to be with him ere long, to behold his glory. Our duty *now* is to honour him in active and passive services, as he shall appoint. Yet a little while, (is it not a little while?) and he shall wipe all tears from our eyes. Our souls believe this. Do they not, my uncle? Even we, worthless and unholy as we are, shall be permitted, through the righteousness of our God and Saviour, to see his face, and rejoice in his love! Well, then, we will "look at the things which are not seen;" and there is no reason why we may not weep as well as sing Hallelujah!

Since I wrote you, I have been called to know a feeling to which my heart had before been a stranger. On the 15th Oct. Mrs. M. gave birth to a sixth son and eighth child; a babe to all appearance as hearty and vigorous as any she had borne. But on the next morning, without alarm or notice, his little spirit stole away, and was an hour in Abraham's bosom before we missed it, though we were looking at him. My dear wife met the shock as a Christian mother ought to meet it. In consequence of a cold taken afterwards, her health has been much impaired. She was twelve weeks confined to the house; and though at present so far recovered as to go about and walk out, is very weak and much reduced in flesh. Some complaint hangs about her, for which, the physician says, her best remedy is a long journey. If I can prevail with her, I shall take her on a tour through the Eastern States.

Our Seminary flourishes. We have fourteen students, several of whom, if spared, promise to become men of distinction. Next season the prospect is that we shall have a considerable increase. Where the means are to come from, I cannot tell. He will provide, who provides the youth. My way is dark; but I know who "brings light out of darkness;" levels mountains and fills up valleys. It is all as it should be. He, whom we serve, "sees the end from the beginning." We may safely follow an omniscient and omnipotent leader.

Give my tenderest love to Christie. I hope it is her first concern to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and her second to soothe your solitude with all the sweetness and promptitude of filial duty. Oh, that I could be with you once more, and speak face to face. I long with greater earnestness than ever after my friends in Britain, and especially after your family. Have you abandoned all thoughts of visiting the New World? When good understanding between our governments shall return, and I hope it is near, come all of you: father, and sons and daughters. But I dream—yet I cherish the fond expectation of seeing you on your side of the Atlantic, or on mine.

DR. M. TO MRS. SMART.

NEW YORK, 9th April, 1808.

MY DEAR MARGARET: I am in your debt; but I write with that mixture of feeling which naturally arises out of the change which has happened in your circumstances since my last. By a casual sentence, I was informed that it has pleased God to remove your mother. She has gone, we have every reason to hope, to that better world where "the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick; because the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity." My pleasing idea of once more meeting her in this life has vanished; but I entertain the more pleasing idea of joining her in that life which shall have no fellowship with death. We are conversant, my cousin, with nothing earthly that is not marked as a source of our pain sooner or later. Friends are dear, their intercourse sweet, their image the parent of many tender associations; but the heart is alive to woe, and in proportion to the exquisiteness of its joys, is also the keenness of its anguish and the bitterness of its grief. What should we do, my Margaret, without that "hope which maketh not ashamed?" It is faith in "the Resurrection and the Life," that triumphs over the "last enemy," and goes down to the grave as but the dark entrance into the region of everlasting rest. No other eye than the eye of a believer in Jesus, can see the portal of the world of light at the further end of the passage; and the gloom of nature is midnight melting away into the daybreak of Heaven. I would not take a thousand thrones for the blessedness of that man who, ransomed from the earth by the "blood of sprinkling," is enabled, at the very moment when "his heart and his flesh fail," to set his victorious foot upon the "old serpent," and step from off his "bruised head" into the Paradise of God. This, my dear cousin, is a glory worth possessing. The title to it is purchased by our Lord Jesus, and offered to our acceptance in the Gospel of His grace. Is it yours, my dear Margaret? I would ask my own soul the same question; and may He, who gives and forgives like God, put His spirit within us, that we may say in truth, "Yea, Lord, thou knowest all things—thou knowest that I love Thee."

You probably have not heard that last fall our Heavenly Father sent us another lovely boy, with permission just to look at him, and then ordered him away. The angels whispered in his ear, "Come up hither." He remained in our sinful world only twenty-three hours; and was off to the company of those little ones whose angels behold the face of God in Heaven. My dear Nancy, you may suppose, was much affected, but she has not her consolation to seek when the occasion for resorting to it comes. She suffered no personal injury from the shock, but took cold about three weeks afterwards, the consequences of which remain with her till this day. It is my intention, if the

Lord will, to try the effect of a journey as far as Boston, when the weather shall be settled.

DR. M. TO MRS. A. GIBSON.

New York, 9th April, 1808.

My Dear Agnes: I have postponed, from time to time, the expression by letter, of the interest my heart takes in your happiness, and my congratulation on your marriage in a manner, which, your father has informed me, bids fair to cherish those sweet affections, and to perpetuate that solid, but noiseless comfort to which you had been accustomed under his roof. These things might now be out of season, even if I were not under the sad necessity of connecting with the idea of my favourite Aggie's having become a joyful wife, the mournful one of her having lost a devoted mother. It must be so, my cousin. We walk through a world of death; and souls, knit by the strongest ties of endearment, must suffer the pang of separation. But I hope that you are enabled to view this dispensation of Providence in a proper light; that your spirit is neither indifferent nor rebellious; that instead of murmuring at your privation, you have learned to vent your full bosom in gratitude to your kind and merciful God, for granting you the instruction, example, solicitude, prayers, and inspection of both parents, till he confided you to the protection of an amiable and worthy husband. His choicest blessings rest upon you both! May He dwell in your house! May He dwell in your hearts! May He put His name and His glory there, enabling you to live together as "heirs of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered." I say your *prayers;* for I cannot admit the thought that my Aggie's house is a prayerless house. Nay, I trust, now that she is become the mistress of a family, and perhaps the mother of a little immortal, she will "know the God of her father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind." Our chief business here, my cousin, is to be "ready to depart and be with Christ." They only have a right to be cheerful, "over whom the second death shall have no power." With what sweet serenity, with what activity of effort, with what buoyancy of heart, can we go about our duties, when we are well ascertained, that "whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die to the Lord; so that living or dying, we are the Lord's." Less than this I do not desire for you; more, I cannot.

For domestic particulars, I refer you, at present, to your father and Margaret. Assure your husband of my kindest wishes.

DR. M. TO DR. WAUGH, LONDON.

New York, 9th April, 1808.

My Dear Friend: With delight and gratitude I have heard of your recovery from your indisposition, and your restoration to the best work which can employ our souls and bodies in this sinful world. Blessed be the Lord Jesus that he was a minister of the Gospel! Blessed be his name, that He does not let us know beforehand what we are to encounter in preaching his cross, and promoting his cause! and blessed be it, that He never forsakes us in the most difficult and discouraging circumstances. I do not think the Apostle Paul was ever more eloquent, more elevated, more perfectly above the trials of his station, the malice of men and the assaults of hell, than when he penned that glowing paragraph to his Corinthian friends, 2 Cor. vi. 1—12. It makes one's heart almost to leap out of its casement, to believe that we shall one day see that hero of the truth and talk with him about all his services and sacrifices for a Master whose "loving-kindness is better than life." What a series of afflictions, and joys, and contests, and victories! What a chequered history from his adventure of that basket at Damascus, to the display of his chain before Felix, and his majestic deportment with Nero! But there is one thing much better even in *this* life, than hearing the incident of the basket from his own lips in heaven. It is the presence, consolation, support, of that same Saviour who made Paul what he was. O! my friend, what is this?—that He should put His treasure into our crazy vessels, and honour our clay to be the vehicle of His truth, His grace, His eternal salvation! Blessed be His name forever! Let no effort of ours be deemed misapplied in showing forth His praise!

Your brother in the Gospel,
J. M. MASON.

DR. M. TO REV. DR. A. HUNTER, EDINBURGH.

NEW YORK, April 9th, 1808.

MY DEAR SIR: I have to acknowledge the receipt of two very kind letters from you; and at the same time, an appearance of negligence on my part. I am sure that the want of any condolence on the affliction wherewith the Lord has been pleased to visit you, has been abundantly compensated, not merely by the presence of Christian friends, but by the presence of him who is better than all Christian friends. In a dying world, it is proper that we should not only see death making his ravages but feel his interference with our own delights. Blessed be God for the assurance, that death himself is mortal; and that the hour approaches when they that sleep in Jesus will rise to a beauty, a felicity, and a glory, over which pain and sorrow and dissolution shall have no control. Such is your expectation in regard to your departed wife. Such is the believer's expectation with regard to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Let us cherish the holy hope, and come daily and boldly to the throne of grace for mercy to act under its influence.

It will afford you real pleasure to hear that the experiment of our Theological Seminary succeeds beyond the ill-bodings of the timid, and the expectation of even its resolute friends. Great good will spring, I trust, from this institution. The example, as you wished, has provoked others; and there is now a very vigorous attempt carrying on near Boston for rearing up an evangelical and able ministry, to carry the Gospel throughout the land, and especially where the Socinian leaven has leavened a large part of the lump.

Have you or your friends any Hebrew or Greek Lexicons to spare? These would be an invaluable acquisition to us; and I think not improperly bestowed. In the midst of your great libraries and old establishments, you have no conception of our difficulties. Large fortunes can do anything anywhere. But we have no large fortunes; and our pecuniary means must be husbanded with the most rigid economy, or we shall not be able to take care of our youth.

I am, dear Sir, with grateful affection,
Your friend and pupil,
J. M. MASON.

DR. M. TO REV. G. BURDER, LONDON.

NEW YORK, April 11th, 1808.

MY DEAR SIR: The departure of my excellent Christian friend, Mr. Divie Bethune, for England, gives me a favourable opportunity of discharging the obligation imposed on me by your kind letter of Jan. 26, 1807.

Facts which have occurred since I wrote you, have abundantly justified the caution I felt it my duty to observe respecting our Western revivals. Judicious and fervently pious ministers of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, now lament the premature zeal with which they gave their sanction to the current opinion on this subject. The deductions are so many and so weighty from the mass of good supposed to have been effected, that the remainder is comparatively small; and, like a heap of snow under a warm sun, is hourly diminishing. I feel, however, much real satisfaction in being able to state, that in several places in New Jersey and New England the power of the Gospel has lately been displayed in a remarkable manner; and hitherto the phenomena are so Scriptural and unexceptionable, that I am very sanguine in my expectation that the result will embolden us to say to all the world, This is the finger of God.

By Mr. Bethune, your Society will receive a communication and some curiosities from that amiable and devoted man, Mr. Morrison. I take it for granted, that Messrs. Gordon and Lee will inform you of their own circumstances.

A letter written to me from Otaheite, dated 3d Nov., 1805, signed "John Jefferson, for the Society," and lately received, contains the following paragraph, which much surprised me: "We have not had the happiness of hearing from our connexions in England for some years past, though we have had sundry opportunities of transmitting journals and letters to them."

Another letter from Mr. Youl, dated Aug. 8, 1806, and received by the same conveyance, repeats the same thing. Mr. Youl says, that their "last letters from London are dated so far back as 1800." They also mention, though in a very modest manner, that "their wants are greatly multiplied;" but specify no particulars.

DR. M. TO MR. HARDCASTLE, LONDON.

New York, 12th April, 1808.

My Dear Friend: I have heard nothing of you, excepting incidentally, this long time; and I am not so great a proficient in the art of self-denial as to forbear inquiring, by our friend Bethune, after you and your good family, and my Christian acquaintance. May I not say to you, as the beloved disciple did to the hospitable Gaius, "I desire that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth?" Blessed days for a believer, when the flourishing of his graces, furnishes a standard for the prosperity of his outer man. A frail body with such a soul, may well be endured; for the light of life that dwells within it, will continually send out its consolations to proclaim that the *Schekinah* is there. "What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" A strange word, but a true one. Yes, we know it, Heavenly Father; but we have reason to be humbled to the lowest dust, and we fly to thy fatherly forgiveness, when we think that we are so very apt to forget it. It is infinitely good for us that we have a divine teacher. The "moral suasion" of the Arminians, is a "smoke in my nostrils." Without better instruction and more potent influence, the age of Methuselah would be too short to learn the alphabet of that "Word which maketh wise unto salvation." The whole tribe of them who will not be indebted to the Spirit of Jesus for all that they know, or hope to know; taste, or hope to taste; of the Lord's own goodness in this world or the next—the whole of them put together, have not as much to say for the Redeemer, nor so lucid and convincing a testimony to bear to his name, as a babe of *nine years old*, in my congregation, who is dying of a dropsy, and is going away to heaven, with the intelligence and the tongue of a little seraph. "I shall see his face," said the infant believer to me, and I use *her own* words, "I shall sing his praises; I shall be free from sin." "I have no will of my own, but if it be his will, I had rather go and be with him."—"I have no fear of death."—"I wish to die, and that he would take me to himself."—Oh, he is a most gracious God! a most blessed God! a most holy God! a most glorious God."—Then after a little pause, being nearly exhausted, she closed her eyes and said to herself, very distinctly, though in a low breath, "Our gracious God; our blessed God!" All this and much more, of which a particular account will be preserved and published.

Our Theological Seminary goes on under promising circumstances. Our British friends will have no cause, I trust, for repenting of their patronage. We could not have commenced without it. And if in the magnitude of their exertions for the Redeemer's cause, there is an odd guinea or two to spare, the boon will be very grateful; for we have more godly youth, and youth of talent, pressing forward, than we are well able to provide for, while at their studies. We have planted; you have watered; and God has given the increase.

Still more extensive was his American correspondence. A few, selected from many of his letters written at this period, show us the man. Most of them explain themselves.

DR. M. TO MR. J. NORRIS.

NEW YORK, May 10, 1808.

DEAR SIR: Mr. Emerson's letter on the subject of pulpit eloquence deeply interests me. I want no argument to convince me of the unhappy effects of *reading* sermons. I have seen enough to remove all doubts, if any doubt could exist in the mind of one who is at the pains of analysing the mechanism of human feeling, or of considering the natural fitness of means to ends. I do not know such a publication as I think he wishes to see. Claude's Essay on the Composition of a Sermon is, perhaps, the best work for the literary management of a discourse. There are some fine remarks in Fenelon's little book of Dialogues on Eloquence. The modern performance which *breathes* most of the orator, at least of those which have fallen in my way, is the Abbé Maury's "Principles of Eloquence." I think a public speaker can learn much from that Jesuit. But all these, I suppose, are familiar to Mr. Emerson. If, however, he wish to possess any of them, I shall find a particular pleasure in procuring and forwarding them. Of people who write *about* the eloquence of the pulpit, there is no lack; but no drier or duller productions are to be found than most of these, which very learnedly show how "an apostle did *not* preach." A cart load of them would be dear at a groat. I do not know that the addition of Dr. Blair's Lectures on that point would make me raise my bid to sixpence; for assuredly if a man be permitted to consult his feelings (and if he do *not*, far from him be the thought of meddling with eloquence!) he must say of that same Dr. Blair, what a lively Frenchman said of his small philosopher of a countryman, Condorcet, that "*he writes with opium on leaves of lead!*" You see, Sir, that although a stranger, I impose no restraint upon my pen. I am in the habit, more to the peace of my conscience, than to my convenience in other respects, of speaking as I think; and I have no fellowship with criticisms that affect to have secrets. I shall take the first leisure to write to Mr. Emerson.

It will be recollected that in some of his preceding letters, Dr. Mason spake of his intention to take a tour through New England, for the benefit of Mrs. Mason's health. It was so ordered by Providence that this tour was not made till the latter part of summer. A note to Mr. King, in relation to some letters which had been promised for the occasion, shows the graceful courtesy with which he was accustomed to unite Christian thoughts with the expression of his feelings to friends of every class. Mr. King's son had accidentally received a serious wound in his forehead, from a pitchfork.

TO RUFUS KING, Esq.

New York, 27th July, 1808.

Dear Sir: Will it be convenient to send the letters which you were so good as to promise me for the eastward? A parcel directed to me, I suppose, would come safe by the Jamaica stage. After to-morrow, I know not that I shall wait for anything but your letters. I should have called to see you, had my occupations permitted.

The interest you take in your friends is the principle by which, I hope, you will estimate the pain with which I heard of the alarming accident to Frederick, and my joy in the expectation that your fears may be very happily disappointed. It is a beneficent dispensation, by which God draws back his protecting hand for one moment, and stretches it out again the next—a strong and gracious appeal to the heart, confirming all the dictates of the understanding and the doctrines of his word, concerning our entire dependence upon him, and the watchfulness of his fostering care. The peril and the preservation of your boy are worth a thousand abstract syllogisms to establish, not only the truth, but the consolations of a particular providence. Who that is not insane would sacrifice, for all the substitutes of a freezing philosophy, the sweet repose of the heart upon this assurance, "As a father pitieth his children, so Jehovah pitieth them that fear him."

I have grievously erred, my dear Sir, if observations like these shall appear to you impertinent. My apology must be, that I know not how more forcibly to express my personal attachment, than by my wishes and prayers that the bosom of a most valued friend may be the abode of the faith, the purity, and the peace of the Gospel.

I shall be much gratified to hear that Mrs. King has suffered no serious inconvenience from the shock she must necessarily have felt from the injury to her son. Make my best regards acceptable to her, and to the rest of your family; and believe me to be, my dear Sir,

With esteem and affection,

Yours truly,

J. M. MASON.

Dr. Mason had not "erred" in the hope expressed at the close of his note; as may be seen in the answer which he received the next day, wherein it is evident that the feelings of the *father* were not lost in the character of a great man:—

TO THE REV. DR. MASON.

JAMAICA, L. I., July 28, 1808.

DEAR SIR: I have received your friendly letter of yesterday, and both Mrs. King and myself are heartily thankful to you for the kind wishes and consoling reflections that it contains.

Though the poor child's wound was extremely hazardous, and the danger is not yet passed, he has, thanks to God! suffered very little pain; and as no unfavourable symptom has hitherto occurred, we are encouraged to hope that it may be the merciful will of the Almighty, that his dear life shall be spared to us.

The enclosed letters are all I have been able to prepare, being called off by company. If you think it probable that you shall go to Portsmouth, I will send you some other letters for that place—as also one or two for Salem.

With sincere regards, I remain, dear Sir,
Your faithful and obedient,
RUFUS KING.

After his return from the East, Dr. Mason received a letter from Dr. Morse, dated Charlestown, October 4th, 1808, saying: "The impression you have left in this region, is highly favourable to the cause of religious truth. I hear no wounding remarks. We had a delightful day for opening our Theological Institution. Every thing proceeded as we wished. The effect on opposers is powerful. Dr. Dwight's sermon was highly acceptable. In Boston they are ready to proceed with the new meeting house."

The last reference is doubtless to the Park Street Church, which was viewed by the whole Christian community as a very important step in resuscitating evangelical piety in that metropolis.

A few weeks later, Dr. Morse again wrote, urging Dr. Mason to review and answer a pamphlet which had just appeared in opposition to the Andover Seminary, and to the cause of evangelical truth generally. Dr. Mason has been very much misunderstood by those who have represented him as ever eager for a contest, and especially as ready, uncalled for, to put himself forward as a vaunting champion against every heresy which he might descry in any part of the land. It is true that he regarded Unitarianism, denying the divinity and atonement of Christ, and the work of the Spirit in man's salvation, as a fatal error; and that he never failed on fit occasions to raise his warning voice against it; but it was always in the spirit of grief, and with the desire to magnify the Saviour, and not himself. In the present instance, even if the error had been nearer his own door, his hands were too full of other things to admit of turning them to the task for which he was importuned.

During the excursion referred to, he also visited New Haven. This gave occasion for the following letter from a brother in the Gospel, who was then a pastor in that town, and afterwards became a very distinguished Professor and Author in the Seminary at Andover:—

TO THE REV. DR. MASON

New Haven, October 17, 1808.

Rev. and Dear Sir: Your departure from us was so sudden, after your sermon, that we had no time to ask many questions which we wished to ask. I have been importuned unceasingly to tell when your sermon is to be published; and all the answer I can give is, It will be published when the volume is published. This gives no satisfaction; and there is no way but I must write and know (if possible) the day and hour it will come from the press. If this is a question which you can and will answer, it will save me the loss of several hours every week, in giving opinions and making guesses.

Never did a sermon make such an impression here. Even our Connecticut Bishop's son, who heard it, declared he never heard such a sermon before. If you mean to publish by subscription, you will not want for subscribers.

The advocates of prelacy here are *wondrous wise.* They have discovered that your first sermon here was aimed entirely at their church. I think the "Layman" with his *δια* and *μετα* ought to be placed at their head.

Yours, with affection and respect,
MOSES STUART.

Inquiries at Boston led to the following brief but pleasant correspondence:—

TO THE REV. DR. MASON.

Boston, Oct. 19th, 1808.

Sir: Miss Cabot has transcribed the correspondence concerning General Hamilton's military appointment and Col. Pickering's letter relative to the monument proposed to be erected in honour of Washington. The whole, including one extract from Gen. Knox, make twenty-six letters; and are contained in a packet which Mr. Quincy is so good as to take with him, and which he will deliver to you on his arrival at New York.

They have been carefully collated and are correct. Permit me to hope they will be useful to your purpose, and that we may soon see what is so much desired.

I am, Sir, with great respect,
Your most obedient servant,
GEORGE CABOT.

TO G. CABOT, Esq.

NEW YORK, Oct. 30th, 1808.

MY DEAR SIR: I am this moment favoured with your very acceptable note of the 19th and the packet to which it refers. The whole arrived, through the care of our friend Mr. Quincy, "in good order and well conditioned." My best thanks are due for your kind attention; and I beg you to assure Miss Cabot that I feel myself not a little flattered and obliged by the pains she has taken in transcribing the manuscripts. The honour of *such* an amanuensis seldom falls to the lot of *un pauvre homme de lettres.* Had I ever worn the bays of Apollo, I should feel it a poetical duty to return my homage in an *ode.* But as I long ago found the muse of poesy very coy to my courtship, Miss C. must e'en be content with my thanksgiving in honest prose. I shall feel an additional stimulus from your wishes to be "forthcoming" soon; but whether sooner or later,

I shall be unalterably yours, &c.
J. M. MASON.

CHAPTER XXV.

1809.

VINDICATION, THE MAGAZINE, ASSISTANT, ETC.

Letter to A. Van Vechten, Esq.—Letter from the Rev. Moses Stuart—Letter from Dr. James E. B. Findley—Letter from Rev. Moses Stuart—Letter to Rev. John Lind, Assistant in the Seminary—Letter to Rev. R. Morrison—Letter to Rev. John McJimsey—Settlement at Albany.

THE following letter serves to show the unreasonable manner in which Dr. M. was often charged with political offences of which he was entirely innocent, as well as the playfulness with which he could treat them:—

TO A. VAN VECHTEN, ESQ.

NEW YORK, March 15, 1809.

MY DEAR SIR: My friend Mr. Romeyn has just now told me that there is great displeasure among your Honours of the Legislature at the petition and remonstrance of the New York Missionary Society, relative to their charter; and that there is new wrath upon my unlucky head as the author of the said indecorous application. It is a bad thing for a man to get his name up for being an offender against the majesty of the people. Knowing my federal iniquities, and feeling no symptoms of repentance, I have but little to say on that head. However, as I love to put the saddle on the right horse, I think proper to inform you, that I have had no hand whatever in drawing up, or supporting that paper. Whether I was correct in my judgment or not, I am too little of a civilian to be confident; but so it was, that, in opposition even to legal opinion, I contended for the safety of the Society under their charter, modelled as your Honours thought fit to model it; and that upon these two grounds:—

1. No law can contravene the Constitution of the State; but the Constitution secures absolutely the religious liberty of the citizen; one branch of which is the formation of religious associations, or their elections when formed; and that any body has, as a matter of course, a perfect *civil* right to propose any *tests* of admission not contrary to the laws of the State; and that all religious incorporations, and the whole incorporating law for particular congregations, are nothing but applications of this great constitutional principle.

2. The preamble of a law must regulate the construction of its provisions; it being absurd and insufferable to imagine that the *means* adoped by the public wisdom are destructive of the *ends* which they were designed to promote.

Therefore no interpretation of the act incorporating the New York Missionary Society which makes it infringe the Constitution, or contradict its preamble, can be sound; but all its expressions must be explained, if possible, in consistency with both.

In the progress of the business, however, I was overruled. The greatest discontent and most unceremonious criticisms came from the *Democratic* members. The offensive paper is from a *Democratic* pen—it is said, the pen of Dr. Wilson. *It is said*, for I was never at the pains to inquire who wrote it, as I did not and do not care a Jersey copper about the matter. Only having read it when it was sent to me for my name, *I refused my signature*, because I could not, as an honest man, adopt its sentiments. If you shall be at the trouble to look, you will see that *my name is not there.*

I am, notwithstanding, sorry that offence has been taken. The paper did not strike me, on a cursory perusal, as so obnoxious; and I am confident that no member of the Board of Directors either intended the least disrespect, or dreamed that they should have such an indecorum imputed to them. I speak merely from my private conviction; for I was not at the Board when the petition was agreed upon; nor have I till this hour exchanged a syllable with one of them on the subject.

Although I do not feel any dreadful alarm to have the bantling fathered upon me by my good Democratic friends, yet, as I do not conceive myself bound *in duty* to be a scapegoat for the trespasses of *patriotic* sinners, I send you this bit of intelligence with permission to apply it to any purpose which your discretion shall think proper to connect with the name of your friend and humble servant,

J. M. MASON.

Certain irregularities, which had occurred respecting the emission of the Christian's Magazine, occasioned some of the remarks of the letter which follows:—

TO THE REV. DR. MASON.

NEW HAVEN, March 7th, 1809.

REV. AND DEAR SIR: Your favour by Mr. Leffingwell I have received, and am glad to find that you rely so much upon my "*meekness*." Be assured, I should have been happy to have received a letter from you sooner, because I should always be happy to receive one at any time; but knowing the multiplicity of your concerns, I have never imputed your delay to any want of regard.

With respect to your Magazine, I can assure you, if your work makes slow, it will make sure progress in Connecticut. Where it is known, it is duly valued; and its fame is diffusing itself through our commonwealth. I wish, with all my heart, I could tell you 10,000 copies for this State.

The disappointment which subscribers have experienced as to the time of publication, has occasioned no small complaint. They say, "If the work were an indifferent thing, we should care but little, but we cannot bear to be tantalized with what we value." They have no means of estimating your difficulties, and feel almost ready to impute it to procrastination. Nobody complains of genius or faithfulness in the execution. The *time* is all the grievance.

Enough of this. For myself, come sooner or later, your Magazine is always welcome. I hope you will not abandon it; and I beg of you, for the sake of truth and religion, not to abandon it, unless it becomes absolutely necessary on pecuniary grounds. It would be a loss to our churches and to the cause of Christ.

May I venture to solicit, that you will cause our complement of Magazines to be sent on to New Haven, as soon as they are ready? I take no rest, when I hear that they are out, before I have hold of them.

I am, dear Sir,
With much respect and esteem,
Yours sincerely,
MOSES STUART.

Another testimony in favour of the Magazine, though prompted in part by personal feelings, must have afforded no small gratification to the Editor—a gratification which no doubt will in some sort be shared by the Christian readers of the tract to which it refers:—

TO THE REV. DR. MASON.

BEAUFORT, S. C., Sept. 7th, 1809.

REV. SIR: Though I have not the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with you, yet I am not a stranger to your writings. The Christian's Magazine in particular, which has lately fallen into my hands, has been read with much edification and satisfaction. Indeed, I feel myself urged, by one circumstance especially, to address these few lines to you.

The writer of this letter is the youngest and only surviving child of the late Rev. Dr. Samuel Finley, formerly President of Princeton College, whose dying experience you have so strikingly contrasted with the death of David Hume. The former died the death of the righteous. I was very young at the time, but I can never forget the impressive manner in which he laid his dying hands upon my head, blessed me, and committed me to the care of my Heavenly Father. As to the latter, there was something so puerile, so unbecoming even a philosopher, in the manner of his meeting the approach of death, that it has given me a low opinion of the power of infidel principles to support a man in that trying hour. I have read somewhere of a ship lost in a storm with many persons on board: for a long time the lamentations were great, when all of a sudden, as the ship was sinking, a general burst of laughter was heard till the water covered them out of sight. Is there not something like the gaiety of despair?

Be pleased, Sir, to accept my warmest thanks for this tribute of respect to the memory of a parent, whose good name and worth your Magazine will be the means of transmitting to posterity. I should have been ungrateful indeed, to have remained silent and indifferent, whilst you were—to use classical terms—" ornans memoriam patris mei." I really know not in what manner to express my feelings; and I beg you to accept this scrap rather as a token of what I wish to do, than what can be accomplished by a letter.

Among other things in your Magazine, I have read with great satisfaction the Essay upon the Organization and Transmission of the Visible Church, and have often wished that it were published in a separate form. Whether this may have been already suggested to you I know not, but trust you will take the hint in good part, and consider whether it may not be done.

I am, Rev. Sir,
With great respect,
JAMES E. B. FINLEY.

There is much further evidence that Dr. Mason was importuned by the friends of orthodoxy, in New England, to aid them in the defence of God's truth against the assaults which, in various ways, had powerfully commenced in that quarter. The following letter expressed the desires of many:—

TO THE REV. DR. MASON.

NEW HAVEN, June 15th, 1809.

REV. AND DEAR SIR: You have doubtless heard of, or seen, the "*Improved Version*" of the New Testament, lately republished in Boston. The basis of it was laid by the late Gilbert Wakefield, who was only Celsus resuscitated. It purports to be completed by a Society of "Learned Men," in London, and excepting some of its naked infidelity and blasphemy, is calculated to promote the Socinian heresy, by an ostentation of learning and moderation.

That the book should be reviewed, and reviewed so as to exhibit all its deformity and infidelity to the public, is necessary to the interests of true religion. The eyes of the religious public, at Boston and in this quarter, are turned towards you. I have been pressed by our friends at Andover, Charlestown, and other places, to write to you a request from us all, that you would not say—Nay. If you have made your final conclusion at this place, then we must shut our mouths; if not, please to read the next page.

We are aware that we shall be met at the threshold with objections, but we are not in the least daunted. Relying on the merits of our cause, we are prepared to prove that it is reasonable—right—and *must prevail.*

Having read the "Messiah's Throne," we are satisfied of your zeal and ability to defend the glorious doctrine of Christ's divinity. Dear Sir, it is the cause of Jesus—his dear name has been traduced and vilified—the Spirit of God has been insulted, by turning his eternal truth to falsehood; and the finger of the churches points to you as their advocate on this occasion. We must press it—and we must take the liberty to say we *cannot*—may we add—*will not* have *No*, for an answer.

We should not say thus, if we did not feel compelled by a sense of duty. Be so kind as to let me know immediately, if possible, whether you will undertake. Fifteen or twenty leading verses will be all that you will be obliged to consider, to annihilate the thing. If you have not a copy, let me know it and you shall immediately have one.

The editors of the Panoplist are waiting with anxiety for your answer. Yours, with affection and esteem,

MOSES STUART.

Considering the weight of his pastoral charge and his many other duties, from none of which he was disposed to spare himself further than necessity compelled him, it is not surprising that Dr. Mason began to desire aid in the labours of the Seminary. Of this we have an intimation in a letter addressed to one of his first students, at that time happily and usefully settled in Greencastle, Pennsylvania:—

TO THE REV. JOHN LIND.

New York, 15th March, 1809.

My Dear Lind: Our friend Mr. Fullerton having just called on me with information that he expects to see you in a few days, has refreshed my memory with the ungracious recollection that

I have "left undone the thing that I ought to have done." Experience, that hard but impartial preceptor, has taught me what I have sometimes told you, but what I suppose you, like your neighbours, will hardly learn a second hand, that if we expect to find time for doing anything, we must *make* it. And so, this being the most busy day of the seven, (Wednesday) I sit down to write at *leisure* because I resolved to do so; and I resolved to do so, because I felt too much like an epistolary sinner, to be any longer comfortable in my misdeeds, or rather in my *no-deeds.*

You did not tell me whether No. 3, Vol. I. of the Magazine ever reached you. The weight of that work is considerable—especially on the purse. Were my friends acquainted with the drudgery I have endured in consequence of the mismanagement of others, they would be very gentle in their censures on account of past irregularities. I hope hereafter to be more punctual.

The Seminary continues to prosper; but unless God shall please to send us aid in some way not now obvious, there will be a heavy deficit at the close of the Session. But, I trust it is a plant which His own right hand hath planted; and that if we be diligent in the use of means, He will not be slack in shedding down His blessing. For myself, I am often in a great strait. Much as some may suppose my vanity to be gratified by my present station, honourable indeed and worthy of the highest talent, and personal as they may suspect and have intimated my views to be, I should hail, with hearty welcome, the day when I could with propriety resign my trust into other hands. I complain not of pecuniary sacrifices which have always accompanied my public duty, and will forever accompany the public duty of any man who does not make *money* his universal standard. I complain not of the labour which my duty imposes so long as I am able to support it—but in deed and in truth, the work so rises in its awfulness as I contemplate it; and grows so arduous as I proceed; and so magnifies its responsibility, as I look to its results, that I feel it requires, if not much greater capacity, yet certainly much greater information than I am conscious of possessing. Just now the actual labour overwhelms me. I spend with the classes between two and three hours a day; and they occupy my private study three or four more. I distinctly perceive myself breaking under the pressure: and though my robust constitution, and healthful appearance, give no external indication of the real state of my frame, I am not without apprehension that it will fail *suddenly*. Some assistance, I say it *inter nos*, must be provided without delay. The continuance of my exertions will bring me to old age at forty-five. Taking all things together, I am sometimes so cast down and despondent, as to almost say with the repining prophet: "And now, O Lord, take, I pray thee, my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live."—But this is my infirmity—there is nothing for us, my dear Lind, in such circumstances but to cry with another and better-minded prophet: "When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the ROCK that is higher than I." *He* lives; the LORD lives—blessed be our Rock!

You have been indisposed. "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him."—Father Dobbin, I hear is almost *home*. Of his safe arrival, there can be no question. The Lord grant a serene and cheerful passage to his "meek and quiet spirit!" Our love is to you and your dear consort, and mother. "The good will of Him that dwelt in the bush" be with you, and keep you, and comfort you all to the end! Then, then is the consummation. Grace be with you! Believe that you have a deep and tender interest in the heart of

J. M. MASON.

In accordance with such wishes of Dr. Mason, on his motion, the General Synod, in May, 1809, passed the following preamble and resolution:—

"Whereas, the duties of the Professor are found to be too laborious and oppressive for one individual.

"The Synod direct that an Assistant be appointed to aid the Professor in the discharge of his duties; and that it shall be the duty of such Assistant to instruct the students in the original languages of the Holy Scriptures, according to the plan hitherto pursued in the Seminary; and in Scriptural Geography, Chronology, and History."

Thereupon, the Rev. James M. Mathews was appointed.

Though Dr. Mathews afterwards connected himself with another denomination, he contined to hold his office in the Seminary till 1818, when he resigned.

In a letter to the Rev. Robert Proudfit, then of Broadalbin, and afterwards Professor in Union College, Dr. Mason pays a just tribute to the worth and hopefulness of a student whom the former had sent from his church to the Seminary:—

"Your student, Mr. John Campbell, is indeed a promising youth. My very bowels are refreshed with the appearance of such coming forward to the ministry. It is a gratification to labour for such pupils. He is well worth all the care and expense the church is likely to be at for him. With an ordinary blessing he will abundantly recompense her."

These hopes were not disappointed. Mr. Campbell completed his course with credit to himself, and was soon after settled over the Church of Caledonia, N. Y., where he was greatly beloved, and had every prospect of increasing usefulness. But in a few years an insidious disease preyed upon his lungs, and prematurely cut him off from his labours and prospects on earth.

The relations of our government with that of England, were a matter of moment to the missionary operations of both countries. Accordingly the tidings contained in the following letter, must have been as joyfully received as they were joyfully written:—

DR. M. TO THE REV. R. MORRISON, CANTON.

New York, 18th May, 1809.

My dear Sir: I embrace the first opportunity of acknowledging your kind letters of Oct. 21, 1807, and May 11th, 1808. The rigour of the embargo on all American vessels from December, 1807, till last month, cut off, almost altogether, our communication with the rest of mankind. It will give you great pleasure to hear that our differences with Great Britain have been amicably, unexpectedly, and satisfactorily adjusted: so that the wonted intercourse has become again lawful. The British Minister, Mr. Erskine, presented a note to our government on the 17th April making overtures for conciliation; which was answered the same day in a friendly manner. It was followed by a second note on the 18th, which was answered in like manner on the same day. On the 19th, two final notes were exchanged tendering and accepting reparation in the affair of the Chesapeake, &c. On that same day the new President, Mr. Madison, issued his proclamation revoking the non-intercourse act towards Great Britain only; it remaining in force toward France.

The hand of the Lord our God is in this thing; and I hope it bodes well for His church in different quarters of the world.

Such a missionary as you desire, would doubtless be an important acquisition to the station at Canton: but I fear it is without prospect of success that the inquiry would be made. Our own demands for missionaries are so much greater than our supply, that a proposal to send one from America to China would be treated as chimerical.

It will please you to hear that our friends Gordon and Lee, with their wives, and their little ones, are at last proceeding to their destined scene of labours. Mr. Lee has been for some time back preaching in Philadelphia and its vicinity; Mr. Gordon in this city. He parted from us on Monday last the 15th, for Philadelphia, where he takes shipping. The affections and sympathy and prayers of a large number of those who know what it is to pray, went with him. The separation was tender. Why should it not be? But it is a blessed thought! "Separated and not divided!" Would to God that His people were less divided where they are not separated! I feel grieved, and ashamed, and humbled my dear Sir, that the sweet counsel which Christians might and should take together, is so broken up by things which do not affect any one of their Christian interests. My hands have been tied with a very strong cord from using that liberty wherewith Christ has made me free. But we must "endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may be saved." I hope matters are drawing towards a more comfortable issue. Evangelical men and churches among us do not look at each other so coldly as they did. God has done "great things for us" in this land, "whereof we are glad." The blessing has been poured out upon various parts of these States; and at length, the dew has begun to descend on our fleece in this city. The change for the better among different denominations within the last eighteen months, is too obvious not to be noticed, and its character too scriptural to leave doubt. We have, therefore, blessed be His name, a little reviving in our bondage. But I believe it is all we shall get; and that it is a preparative for sorrows at hand. I pray the keeper of Israel to preserve, comfort, and prosper you, in the difficult and honourable effort to "speak peace to the heathen."

The care which he continued to feel for the church at Albany, and his particular regard for the minister whom they had called, occasioned the two notes which follow:—

DR. M. TO THE REV. JOHN McJIMSEY.

New York, 3d October, 1809.

My Dear Brother: Before this reaches you, you will probably have heard the result of the Albany business. Lest, however, you should not, I state for your information, that a call was moderated on Monday of last week, the 25th Sept., and was made out unanimously for yourself. You must therefore be prepared to meet it at the approaching Session of our Presbytery. This is an event which will put both your faith and your feelings to the test. But an ingenuous spirit, such as I know yours to be; and a conscience void of offence, such as I am persuaded you have endeavoured to keep your's, in this, not less than in other matters, have nothing to fear. "The meek He will guide in Judgment, the meek he will show His way." This is one of those peculiar seasons of *need*, in which you are to go (and blessed be his name for the privilege), "with *boldness* to His throne of grace, to obtain mercy and find grace to help." Advice of a decisive sort, I can give none in the present stage of the business. The providence deserves serious consideration. But the ultimate opinion which must rest on public reasons, and on private ones no further than as they are subservient to the other, cannot be settled without a fair comparison of all circumstances. Our Master, whose we are, and whom we serve, will not withdraw His guidance from our honest efforts to do what shall be most for the honour of His name.

How I shall be situated on the Lord's day subsequent to the Presbytery, I cannot tell; but of my readiness to minister to your comfort at all times, and especially in difficult times, you have no cause to doubt. Were it not that I might give occasion to suspicion, I would go to your house first; but as matters are, it will be most prudent to defer our interview till the Presbytery.

DR. M. TO THE REV. J. McJIMSEY.

New York, 4th Dec., 1809.

My Dear Friend: Yours of the 28th ult., which I received this day, gave me heartfelt satisfaction. Your having had, with your family, "a prosperous journey by the will of God," and the affectionate regard shown you by your new people, I would willingly add to all the other indications that your translation has been acceptable to the head of the church, and will be owned of him for her benefit. As you did not remove to Albany for the sake of inglorious ease, you are of course neither depressed nor disappointed by difficulties at the very outset. Where things have been so long, and so greatly confused, it is not the work of a day even for talent, integrity and industry, to put them right. I should see no solid objection to your immediately proceeding to organize your Session, were it not for the circumstance of several of the new-chosen elders having declined. As the relation between you and the congregation in Albany is perfectly settled, as a matter not to be reversed or impeded, the want of the *formal* admission to your charge should not for one moment be weighed against its substantial interests. The drawing back, however, of so many of the elders elect, entirely alters the case. It is made, by that fact, a question not of Presbyterial order, but of *expedience* for the congregation. There is a hand of Providence in it. I have seen such things before; I have seen them turn out very profitably for the church. My advise, therefore, is to pause. The winter will bring you into an acquaintance with your flock, which will enable you to judge more correctly than you can at present. Better wait than have an ill-assorted Session—the greatest pest of a sensible and faithful minister.

CHAPTER XXVI.

1810.

COLUMBIA COLLEGE.

Report of a Committee—Second Report of the same—Confidential Letter to Mr. King—Letter to Mr. Clinton—Letter from Mr. Clinton.

Dr. Mason, as already shown, always felt a deep interest in the literary institutions of the country, and in the promotion of sound scholarship in those youth who were favoured with academical privileges and honours. As one of the trustees of Columbia College, he was several years associated with Mr. Rufus King on a Committee for improving both the discipline and the course of studies in that institution. On the 6th of Feb., 1809, they presented a report from his pen, though signed by Mr. King as chairman, in which they do not content themselves with pointing out and demonstrating existing errors and defects, but propose appropriate remedies. Particularly do they explode the whole system of fines, which had extensively prevailed, as sadly calculated to defeat all the proper end of discipline, and they recommend a system based on the noble principle of appealing to a sense of character in the youth who are at once to be governed, and to be trained for acting a useful and manly part in society. They also recommend at large and with earnestness a higher standard of attainment requisite for entering college; urge the necessity of adapting studies to the age and degree of maturity in each student; and the necessity of thoroughness in everything that is undertaken. Our limits forbid the insertion of this report; but it deservedly has a place in the series of measures by which the College has risen to its present eminence, especially in the department of Classical Literature.

The report referred to was succeeded by another from the same source on the 27th Feb., 1810, in accordance with instructions from the Board, to carry out and reduce to a practical shape the principles of the former. Part of this second report being of a general nature, we here insert:—

"It appears to your Committee that the primary principle of all sound education, viz., the *evolution of faculty* and *the formation of habit*, although often neglected, ought to be so thoroughly incorporated in the college-system, and even amalgamated with its very elements, as to render progress through the classes without due regard to it, by both teacher and pupil, altogether impracticable. If the plan be so constructed as to require ability and diligence, the want of either of these qualifications in the teacher will betray itself in the embarrassment of his department; and the want of either of them in the pupil will be discovered by his habitual failure in duties which a reasonable share of both would have fitted him to perform.

"Your Committee cannot, for a moment, suppose that it is the intention of the board to try that most fruitless and mischievous experiment—the experiment of educating either the naturally stupid, or the incurably idle. A volume could not display the magnitude of the injuries inflicted upon letters, upon religion, upon morals, upon social prosperity, under every form, through the protection granted to incapacity and sloth, by a timid indulgence or a chimerical hope. It is therefore indispensable that the public should see and youth themselves feel, that future students must both have faculties to cultivate, and industry to labour in their cultivation, or that Columbia College will be no place for them.

"With a sufficient reserve for improvements which the vigilance of skilful instructors may point out in the practical details, your Committee think that there ought to be an undeviating adherence to the following principles and their general application.

"1. *Exactness.*—By which is understood the learning perfectly whatever is professed to be learned at all. This can never be attained without attention and patience—causing the subject to pass and repass, in close and frequent examination, till it become familiar, and leave an indelible impression on the mind. The exciting such a habit of attention, as it is the first duty, so it is the greatest difficulty, and the most important victory of an able teacher; and the cardinal secret of a sound education. To produce it, he must insist peremptorily and inexorably upon exactness. His pupils will shrink, they will solicit, they will complain; they may feel a momentary despondence; but there is an elasticity in youth which cannot be long depressed; and a generosity which the firmness of authority, softened by a well adapted soothing, can work up to astonishing efforts. This observation is fully verified by the history of the great schools in England, where accuracy is never dispensed with. The contrary course terminates in the worst effects. Let a lad "get along," as the phrase is, "pretty well"—let his ideas of a point, or his acquaintance with a subject which he is required to master, be only general and confused—let him conjecture where he should be certain; let his preceptor almost put his answer into his mouth, when he hardly knows which way to guess—and he is bribed to intellectual sloth; the season in which he should fix habits of discrimination as well as of prompt acquisition, passes by—and though he bring to the college good native powers, he will leave it with a mind inert and unproductive. Let the idea, then, of a medium between scholarship and no scholarship, be forever banished. Let the ideas of doing a thing, and doing it well, be identified in the minds of both professor and student; and let the doing a thing by halves be equivalent with not doing it at all.

"2. *Punctuality.*—By which your Committee mean that the performance of all exercises should be limited to a certain time, and then be rigorously exacted. The teacher will of course take care that they be both reasonable and sufficient. Under these conditions nothing but a physical impossibility, or such a hindrance as cannot be at all referred to indolence or evasion, should excuse for non-performance. Exactness is not to be expected without painful labour; labour will not be regular and ardent without the hard pressure of necessity. Let it be ascertained that there is no escape; that the thing *must* be done, and it *will* be done. Such an urgency upon the mind disarms temptations to trifling, and often to vice ; keeps it bent on the period and the matter of duty ; throws it into strong action, and perhaps, which is still better, into a sort of agony. Hence spring the finest, the most magnificent effusions of human genius. There exists no more fatal enemy to diligence, improvement, and excellence, than the persuasion that "there is time enough."

"3. *Progression.*—By which your Committee would express a gradation of exercises from easier and shorter to more difficult and ample, according to the power of performance.

"During the whole course of education, the youthful faculties are to be kept upon the stretch. As they develop themselves and gain strength, they are to be employed in work demanding severer tension and more dauntless vigour. As in mathematical science every preceding proposition is an instrument in the demonstration of those which follow ; so in all the branches of education, everything which, before being learned, is an *end*, becomes, when learned, the *means*, and is to be applied, in its turn, to the remoter and abstruser investigations. On no account, therefore, ought students in the more advanced classes, to spend their time in those elementary studies which occupy beginners. It is the impoverishment of intellect—it is a waste of life—it never can be necessary, unless the necessity be created by some mismanagement in the system.

"In conformity with these general principles, it is the conviction of your Committee that the hours spent by the classes with the professors should be chiefly devoted to *examination.* It is the duty of a professor to use his information, not so much for the purpose of displaying it before his pupils, as to direct and assist them in getting information for themselves ; to employ his sagacity and address in eliciting their faculties and inuring them to the habit of *thinking.* The experience of different countries has shown that regular attendance upon lectures and profound admiration of the lecturer, are perfectly compatible with ignorance, with laziness, and with stupidity. If, as Dr. Goldsmith observes, there are many authors who "write through a volume without thinking through a page," there are also innumerable instances of youth going through a four years' course, and as it is absurdly styled "finishing their education," without having their powers even for once put fairly to the test.

" In acting upon the plan suggested by your Committee, the instructions of the professors should be adjusted to each other, so far as the nature of their respective branches shall permit. This can be done to great extent and advantage by the Professor of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, and the Professor of Languages. The classical, which are the principal studies in both our own and the learned tongues, are natural allies, and easily associated. The Professor of Languages should point out, elucidate, and endeavour to make his pupils understand, those unrivalled specimens of taste, of eloquence and of wisdom, with which the ancient writers abound; and the Professor of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres should refer, for examples, to those writers particularly which are studied under the Professor of Languages, comparing them with each other, with the best writers in our own language, and especially with the inspired writings. To exemplify: When there occurs in the lesson of the day a splendid description, the student must be taught to mark the selection of circumstances—the order of arrangement—the grouping of images—the choice of words. When there occurs a specimen of fine and spirited criticism, as in every page of Longinus, to thoroughly comprehend his sense, and to trace the correspondence between his principles and his illustrations. When there occurs an instance of able disquisition, as in the orations of Demosthenes, the student should be obliged not only to translate his words, but to analyze his argument. The same principles, properly modified, should pervade the whole course.

" In this manner we shall cultivate faculty: and our college will send forth taste, eloquence, strong reasoning powers; she will pour out a stream of matured intellect instead of trifling, as colleges have been too much accustomed to do, by ringing the changes upon the alphabet and syllables of their classical horn-book.

" Your Committee are sensible, that this method is not calculated to impart immediate eclat to the professors; but they are equally sensible that it will render the College incomparably more useful than she has ever been; and that it will eventually shed lustre upon both those who teach and those who learn.

"They are also sensible that it requires no ordinary degree of understanding, of dignity, of taste, of diligent and patient labour, in the professors. But they judge also, that no exertion is too arduous, and no sacrifice too costly, to insure the highest display of these professional virtues."

In the progress of the measures for effecting desired improvements, it proved impossible to avoid touching upon certain denominational sensibilities. Dr. Mason, however, endeavoured to exclude everything that might have a sectarian bearing. He would indeed have liked "a course of lectures on the necessity, truth and excellence of divine revelation;" but at the same time he wished it securely guarded against the introduction of every thing in which Christians of all denominations were not agreed. During the pendency of these measures of improvement he had occasion to write a private letter to Mr. King, the Chairman of the Committee, in which his catholic feelings are frankly and forcibly expressed in his characteristic style. In nearly every measure these two gentlemen were entirely agreed; and if on any point they differed in opinion, their cordial friendship for each other never ceased.

The changes contemplated by the Trustees in the statutes and management of the College, required legislative sanction. This led to a brief correspondence with Mr. Clinton:—

DR. M. TO HON. DEWITT CLINTON.

New York, March 1, 1810.

Dear Sir: You may possibly recollect a very free conversation which we had some time ago at your house, relative to Columbia College. I then stated to you at length the circumstances of the institution, and especially the difficulties which we have had to encounter from the restrictions of our actual charter. I also used the liberty to point out the manner in which the amendment to our bill by the Senate, making the Trustees eligible by the Regents, must operate, not only on the feelings of the gentlemen composing our Board, but on the prosperity of the College itself. I well remember the liberal sentiments you expressed on the occasion; and the recollection induces me to ask and hope for your patronage to an application from the Board, which goes up with this letter to our Trustees in Albany, to be presented to the Legislature. I have the most perfect assurance that the granting of our petition will be the beginning of a prosperity to Columbia College which she has never enjoyed hitherto. You are not a stranger to the efforts which I have made personally, for years together, to place our education upon a solid basis, and to rear it up with elegance and dignity. Matters are now in the most favourable train; and I trust that I do not presume too far upon your kindness as a fellow alumnus of the same Alma Mater, in counting upon your favourable interposition, both in the Senate, and among the members as you may fall in with them. As literature is of no political party, it is a consolation that there is some neutral ground, on which gentlemen of different political opinions may meet and harmonize. I entreat, Sir, from your generosity, that no restriction, like that which frustrated our application before, may now be added; not to add the mortification to which we must be subjected by a clause implying at least, that we are unworthy of our trust; and which can be better appreciated by nothing than by your own sensibility. The *principle* of that restriction, viz., putting Columbia College on the same ground with that of Schenectady, does not apply. If I have been rightly informed, that restriction was agreeable to the corporation of Union College. It is the reverse here. The vicinity of Schenectady opens access to sufficient inquiry, and precludes embarrassment and delay. It is the reverse here. And a grant of money was coupled with the restriction in the case of Union College. There was no grant here. Even then it was left optional to Union College. She was to receive the money on condition of acceding to the alteration in her charter. Upon us it was to be fixed unconditionally. Flattering myself that you will view our petition as reasonable, and facilitate the passage of our bill, I shall trespass upon your time no longer than to express the respect with which I am

Your humble servant,

J. M. MASON.

TO THE REV. DR. MASON.

Albany, March 19, 1810.

Dear Sir: The bill relative to Columbia College passed the Senate this morning, without a dissenting voice. The considerations mentioned in your letter had their due weight; and I fully agree with you, that, in whatever relates to the improvement of the human mind, there ought to be no party.

I am respectfully your
Most obedient servant,
DEWITT CLINTON.

CHAPTER XXVII.

1810.

RESIGNATION OF HIS PASTORAL CHARGE.

Wishes a Colleague—Requests a larger edifice—Meeting of the Church—Application to the Presbytery—Speech on the occasion—Letter to Mr. James McChord—Letter from Mr. Joseph Nourse—Letter from Dr. J. Morse—Letter to Mr. J. McChord.

THE resignation of his pastoral charge was undoubtedly the most important event in this period of Dr. Mason's life. As early as 1807, the weight of his various duties, rendering it impossible for him to meet the parochial wants of his church to his own satisfaction, he had felt constrained to ask for a colleague to relieve him of this responsibility. An embargo soon after imposed upon our foreign commerce by the government, so depressed all kinds of business in the city, that the measure was not then pressed. As soon as the embargo was removed, still having the same object in view, he proposed to his Trustees a measure which he thought would enable them without difficulty to accomplish it. This measure was the subject of the following communication:—

NEW YORK, 16th May, 1809.

To the Chairman of the Trustees of the Scotch Presbyterian Church:

SIR: I hope I shall not be thought officious in asking the early and decisive attention of the Trustees to an object of confessed importance, and which has, for some time back been a frequent topic of conversation among the members of our own, and our neighbouring churches—I mean the erection of a new and larger place of worship.

I have often expressed an opinion that a place of worship should be of a moderate size; very little, if any more spacious than the one which we already possess. And to that opinion, as a *general* rule, I still adhere. But this rule like all others, I find by experience, to have exceptions. Great cities produce habits and circumstances which cannot be controlled by a small section of its inhabitants, and which prudence directs them to turn to their advantage. It is a principle in human nature, that everything, to be respectable, must be on a scale proportioned to the scene of action. Large cities, therefore, will have large dwelling houses; large buildings for civil purposes; large establishments for charity; and, on the same ground, large churches. Viewing the subject in this light, I am compelled to yield to the reasons which require us to prepare, without delay, for providing a large and more commodious house of worship.

We owe it to our own relative standing in the community, which will be materially affected for the better by such an alteration.

We owe it to the claims upon our liberality for great and noble purposes of beneficence, which it will be in our power to answer more extensively, as well as more easily, by an increase of members.

We owe it to our own children, who, very shortly, must be expelled from our sanctuary, unless room be made for them.

We owe it, finally, to the great interests of religious truth and order, which our Lord and Master has committed to our hands, and which we are bound both by his authority and his love, to extend as far as we can.

The measure, therefore, which I have taken the freedom to recommend, *must* come into operation before long, whether we will or whether we will not. In this alternative, the sooner the better. If it is to be done at all, my persuasion is, that it should be done *now*. My reasons are these:

That which must be done hereafter, and *may* be done now, ought, for that reason alone, to be done *now*.

They who do not "seize Time by the *forelock*, will find it very difficult to hold him by the *back of the head*." In plain words—if we wait till circumstances command us, when it is in our power to command circumstances, we commit an act of indiscretion of which we shall repent but once, and that is for ever after. This congregation has already lost an immense amount of comfort, if not of property, by permitting occasions to pass by unimproved.

The impediments to the public prosperity are again removed, and the return of commerce and active business has diffused cheerfulness and spirit through the community. Strike while the iron is *hot*. Six months hence may be too late.

There is a strong religious sensibility in the city, peculiarly favourable to the undertaking.

The congregation is ripe for it. It is a subject of conversation and anxiety; and some are ready to step forward with liberal donations.

A number of respectable and religious families are waiting to see if they can be accommodated. They cannot, and ought not to remain unsettled. The prospect of procuring seats will determine them. Otherwise they must and will go elsewhere.

The expense of building will be much less to us than to others. After allowing for the ground and materials already our own, and deducting from the additional cost the amount of donations which will be made, the balance will be comparatively trifling, and, by a judicious mode of arranging the finances of the congregation, will be speedily extinguished. Had the thing been done seven years ago, we might now have flourished in a remarkable degree, and been nearly, if not entirely out of debt. Should the present opportunity be suffered to slip, we may in vain look for another like it for a dozen years to come. There are *critical periods* in the history of societies as well as of individuals, which, if once lost, are lost forever. The present seems to be such with us. Should the Trustees see the matter in this light, as I flatter myself they will, not an hour should be lost in forming their purpose, making it public, and following it up with *active measures*. The whole extent of my personal efforts they know they can command, and that I am, with perfect respect and attachment,

Their much obliged and obedient.

J. M. MASON.

To the foregoing communication the Trustees replied, on the 7th November following, that they had "postponed the consideration thereof for the present."

In consequence of this answer, Dr. Mason convened the whole church on the 12th March, 1810, and made known his intention of resigning his charge. This was done in the following paper, read before them:—

To the Members of the First Associate Reformed Church in the City of New York:

CHRISTIAN BRETHREN: I have requested your attendance this evening, in order to lay before you the result of my reflections on a subject which has long been a source of painful uneasiness to my mind.

It is now nearly seventeen years since it pleased God to call me to the ministry of reconciliation, and to assign me to this congregation as the immediate scene of my labours. The flower of my days has been spent with you. The course of my services has been marked with much imperfection, and many failures; but marked also, as I humbly hope, by some degree of acceptance with God, and usefulness to man. Being the sole pastor of the congregation, I was bound to perform all the duties of that responsible office, in so far as I was really able. For several years after my settlement among you, the state of my health, as you well remember, forbade, almost altogether, my discharge of those important functions which are comprehended under the general term of *Parochial duty.* When this impediment was removed, others were created by trusts and employments so extensive in their nature and so imperious in their obligation, as to demand my first care, and to consume the leisure which I should otherwise have enjoyed. Thus year after year has glided by, duties of high moment to your welfare have been unfulfilled, and the prospect of their being fulfilled by me, is more distant than ever.

Perceiving, as I do, their absolute necessity to your prosperity; knowing that the omission of them gradually weakens the bond of affection which should closely unite a pastor and his people; estranges the mind of individual members from the sense of their common interest in each other; enfeebles the power of social action; and relaxes the nerves of efficient discipline—persuaded that Christian instruction, exhortation, reproof, and consolation, are circumscribed in their influence, and lose much of their effect, when they are not brought home by a discreet exercise of pastoral inspection; and accounting the respect paid to merely public talent but a meagre substitute for that ardent attachment which dies away under the suspicion of neglect; feeling, I say, the weight of these considerations, it is impossible for my heart to be tranquil. My inquietude does not arise from self-reproach. As the highest of all authority, even the indisputable authority of Him whose I am and whom I serve, has released me from parochial duties, by calling me to others which are incompatible with them, my conscience is pure. My anxiety is caused by the damage which your interests must sustain in consequence of parochial duties not being performed at all. Your patience under the privation, and your kindness to me personally, increase, instead of diminishing my difficulty. These things I frankly communicated to you at a congregational meeting in the fall of the year 1807. Although I had frequently spoken of them in private, I did not think it could answer any good purpose to bring them before you collectively, so long as I could not see how the inconvenience was to be remedied. But when a remedy appeared to me as within reach, I embraced an early opportunity of proposing it, which I did at the meeting alluded to, by recommending the choice of an assistant to whom the parochial duties should be exclusively committed. I was disappointed. Beside the embarrassment of our national affairs, which for a time paralysed almost every effort, a more serious check was given to the measure by the state of our finances, which, it was supposed, could not be made sufficient to cover the additional expenditure without either distressing or banishing the poorer part of the congregation. My next concern, therefore, was to devise some means of so augmenting our resources as to remove this obstacle. After very maturely considering the matter, and balancing the advantages and disadvantages both to this congregation, and to the church at large, I suggested the propriety of building a new and more spacious place of worship. As I had no doubt of the practicability of this scheme, and of a sufficiency of numbers speedily to fill the house, my calculation was, that a revenue might be secured, equal to all expenses; and also that sources would be opened of further support for our Theological Seminary, with which, in a great measure, our whole body and a vast amount of Christian interests allied to it, seem likely to stand or fall. But I was again disappointed. The same objection recurred. A new church, it was imagined, could not be erected without oppression to a considerable portion of the congregation. I found also a settled opposition to the plan of my having an assistant on any terms. What the extent of it is, I have not so much as endeavoured to ascertain, because I perceived it to be enough to involve the prosecution of my wishes in much difficulty. Upon the whole I am convinced that my proposal cannot be carried through with that cordiality which is indispensable to your comfort and to my own. The question is decided. My last hope of extricating both you and myself from our perplexed condition, and yet preserving our relation to each other, has vanished away. The higher duties which I owe to the church of God leave no place for the details of a pastoral charge. I am at best but a nominal pastor, and there is no probability of my becoming a real one. I stand in the way of one who might be such. I cannot consent to remain in a situation so afflicting to myself, and so injurious to you. The only alternative is that which I have adopted and am about to mention. An alternative not hastily resolved upon; distinctly anticipated long ago as a possible event; put off by my utmost exertions to avoid it, until I am shut up to it; pondered, with much tenderness and solemnity, at various intervals and under various states of mind; spread out, not once, nor twice, "with strong crying and tears," before the mercy-seat; and not resorted to after all but from a deliberate and thorough conviction of duty as in the sight of God, and as one that must give account. Brethren, we must part. My agitation and my anguish in announcing this to you are extreme. But the die is cast. The thing is inevitable. I have, therefore, to inform you, that it is my intention to resign my pastoral charge into the hands of the Presbytery of New York, at their next stated meeting, to be held in the town of Newburgh on Wednesday the 16th day of May next ensuing. I give you this early notice that you may appoint, if you shall judge it proper, commissioners to attend the Presbytery, and make any representations which you may desire, so as to save the Presbytery the trouble of a special meeting. At the same time candour obliges me to state, that I have communicated my purpose, not as a matter on which my own mind is dubious or wavering; nor as a manœuvre to accomplish, by indirect means, views which I directly attempted without success. My resolution is fixed, and cannot be altered by any steps which may now be taken.

I shall detain you no longer than to subjoin an observation or two for preventing mistakes. During the whole period of our connexion the utmost harmony has subsisted between us. The reiterated proofs of your affection I shall cherish as a spring of grateful recollection while my memory retains her seat. Dissatisfaction with my people I have none. Neither am I influenced by pecuniary motives. Your last unsolicited, unexpected addition to my income, notwithstanding the evils under which you labour were not removed, is a proof that you are ready to preclude all just uneasiness on that score.* But my salary doubled, trebled, quadrupled, would not induce me to retract, or even to hesitate. The reasons of my present conduct would still operate with unabated force.

Nor have I been impelled by private chagrin or resentments. I have no personal quarrel with any man among you; and if I had, I should enjoy ineffable consolation from the assurance that the uniform tenor of my life puts me above the suspicion of acting from such paltry passions.

In declaring my intention of resigning my charge, I am not to be understood as expressing any intention of abandoning the pulpit. To preach Jesus Christ and him crucified, is my honour and my happiness: nor shall I desist from my loved employment so long as I am permitted to abide in it; but shall continue to labour in word and doctrine as God in his providence shall appoint me to a proper scene of action. In the interim between this date and the meeting of the Presbytery in May, I shall perform, if the Lord will, my public functions as usual.

The respect which I owe to my more intimate friends, and especially to the members of Session, demands an explanation of my silence on this interesting subject until the hour of my laying it before the congregation. It is not strictly a sessional business. Talking of it, while the facts to determine the issue were still in suspense, might have been interpreted as a threat, or at least as an indecorum toward the congregation. I also studied to shun the multitude of discussions to which it would have given rise; and thus to spare myself and my brethren much pain which would otherwise have been unavoidable. My feelings at this moment justify my precaution: they are sufficiently excruciating without having been subjected to agony a thousand times repeated.

---

* Some months before, the congregation, without my request, expectation, or knowledge, unanimously voted the addition of £100 per annum to my former salary. J. M. M.

You will readily excuse me for not addressing you in person on this occasion. My heart tells me that I could hardly sustain the conflict. That heart is filled, and shall be filled with affectionate remembrance of you, and with fervent supplications for your temporal and eternal felicity, while the hand which expresses its emotions is able to subscribe the name of

Your friend and pastor,
J. M. MASON.

New York, March 12th, 1810.

On the 17th May Dr. Mason presented to the Presbytery his formal request for a dissolution of his pastoral connexion in the words following:—

To the Moderator and Members of the Associate Reformed Presbytery of New York, to meet at Newburgh, on Wednesday, the 16*th day of May instant:*

Reverend Brethren: Serious reflection, often repeated, and, for a considerable time past, habitual; accompanied also, if I do not entirely mistake, with scrupulous caution and fervent prayer against an improper bias, has convinced me that my longer continuance in my present congregational charge, will be favourable neither to my own peace, nor to my people's benefit, nor to the general interests of our church.

"Not that I have aught to accuse my people of." Their fidelity to their engagements; their kindness to myself; their respectful attention to my ministry; their public spirit; their orderly deportment, ever since my settlement among them, have endeared them to my heart, and shall forever sweeten the memory of my relation to them.

But I find by experience that parochial cares, to which my own judgment not less than my ordination vows attaches high importance, are incompatible with the work which the Head of the church has been pleased to assign to me; and accordingly I do not so much as pretend to perform the duties resulting from them.

I see the congregation suffering for the want of an efficient pastoral inspection; and I anticipate with alarm the consequences of this evil, unless preventive measures be adopted speedily.

I have used, without success, the only means in my power to avoid the step which I am now forced to take.

My congregation are fully apprised of my intention, and of my reasons, as will appear from the document herewith presented. The decisive expressions there used are to be interpreted simply of my resolution to pursue my present application, and not as interfering, in any degree, with the submission which I owe to the authority of the Lord's house.

I am forbidden by every Christian principle, and by every honourable sentiment, to retain a station of which I cannot fulfil the duties. I am equally forbidden to sacrifice the greater trust to the less; and as faithfulness to both cannot co-exist, I have only the afflicting alternative of praying the Reverend Presbytery to release me from my pastoral connexion.

NEW YORK, 8th May, 1810. J. M. MASON.

Without acting on this request, the Presbytery adjourned to meet in the First Church in New York on the 24th of the same month. On this occasion Dr. Mason gave his views in full on the whole subject. From his speech, which has elsewhere been published, we present the beginning and the close:—

"MR. MODERATOR: If the circumstances under which I now address this Presbytery did not deeply agitate my mind, I should have forsworn the best affections of human nature. In the disruption of any ties which do not bind us to misery, there is something painful; but in the disruption of ties which form one of the most tender relations of life; which time has made venerable, friendship sweet, and religion sacred, there is something at which the heart trembles and shrinks away. I own that I have trembled; I own that I have shrunk, in the anticipation of this hour. Seventeen years of a comfortable, a cherished, and, I trust, not altogether a barren ministry, create feelings which the touch of rudeness would profane; and claims which none but the highest authority can set aside. I have peculiar causes of attachment to my people, and to the place where they worship. Both are, in some sense, my inheritance. Here my father prayed, and God heard him: here my father preached, and God gave him seals of his ministry and crowns of his rejoicing. The memorial of his faithfulness is perpetually before my eye; and in the spot over which I now stand, his flesh rests in hope. I have entered into his labours. The seed which he sowed I have been honoured to water. I have seen many of them who were the friends of his earlier and of his later days, who have also been my own friends, gathered peacefully to the tomb. I see others of them waiting till their change come. I meet every Lord's day; I discern around me now, the faces of not a few whom I may present before the mercy-seat, and say, "These are the children whom thou hast given me." Assuredly, were affection the only thing to be consulted, instead of cutting the cord which unites me to them, I should seek to entwine it more closely with every ligament of my frame. But I am not my own; I am not theirs. I owe a nobler allegiance than can grow out of their love; and to that allegiance do I bow when I ask to be released from my pastoral charge.

"MODERATOR: The system of every well-regulated church is a system of fixed ministrations. For the lighter services of the pulpit; for social prayer and exhortation; generally, for the more public exercises of religion, an itinerant ministry, although, with the exception of *missionaries*, far inferior in labour, in care, in self-denial, in responsibility, may get along and be popular. But for sound exposition of the Scriptures; for "giving to every one his portion of meat in due season;" for training up the youth; for coercive and preventing discipline; for carrying both the law and gospel home to every man's "business and bosom;" briefly, for binding up and consolidating the invaluable interests of a Christian community, there is no adequate, and no appointed means but a *stated* ministry. Without it there may be *preachers*, in abundance, *pastors* there can be none. This broad and obvious distinction is recognized in the form of a call customary in our churches; which, taking for granted that a minister is to *preach*, lays the principal stress upon his pastoral character. True it is, that no man can be a scriptural pastor, who does not "feed his flock with knowledge and with understanding:" but he may provied their weekly food, plenty and good, and yet lamentably fail in his pastoral work. For my own part, the longer I consider the nature and design of the Christian ministry, the more does the importance of those functions which are termed *parochialduty*, rise to my view. I am persuaded, that without them no congregation can permanently flourish, nor any pastor be permanently comfortable. There are a thousand avenues to conviction which no public instruction can enter. A thousand difficulties to be solved which the pulpit cannot reach. There is an adaptation of general truth to particular circumstances, fit only for the private walk or the fireside. There is a correspondence between doctrine preached and exemplified which forces its way silently, but most effectually, to the heart. By pastoral vigilance and prudence, abuses are to be checked, and scandals prevented, which when permitted to ripen for judicial cognizance, are often beyond remedy. It is of unutterable moment to couple, in the early associations of children, the idea of their minister with that of a spiritual father, and of their own relation and duties to the church of God—which is impossible without frequent and affectionate intercourse. The want of this is the most fertile secondary cause of that absurd contradiction which reigns among the churches—treating our baptized youth as if they were mere heathen. The feeble are to be strengthened, the lame to be healed, the wanderers to be hunted up and brought back. The drooping spirit is to be cheered; the thoughtless spirit admonished, the impetuous spirit restrained. The presence of a faithful pastor refreshes the soul of labour, and sweetens the crust of poverty. His voice smooths the bed of sickness, and mitigates the rigours of death. In short, his people expect from him numerous *attentions* which allow of no substitute. They furnish an irresistible argument for rich preparation before he begins. He will find it a hard effort to make up deficiency afterwards, and not withhold them. Yet withhold them, and affection, the basis of confidence and of usefulness, gradually wears away. Talent may inspire admiration; it will certainly command respect; but it cannot extort love. On the other hand, there is nothing which men resent more promptly, forgive more reluctantly, and forget more slowly, than neglect. You may deny their requests; you may expose their errors; you may reprove their faults; but neglect them you may not. The civilities of life, and the friendly exterior may indeed remain; but you shall find, on the first decisive experiment, that the power of their affection is gone. They always feel themselves neglected when the parish services of their minister are not rendered. Whether the neglect be real, or only apparent. Whether there be just cause or not, for the omission, are questions which may have some influence on the progress of things toward this result, but will very slightly, if at all, vary the result itself. The services are not rendered, and that is enough. This night does my own experience seal the truth of my remark.

"Superadded to those general reasonings which apply to all pastors and their people, is a consideration of peculiar force in its application to myself. To me, sir, has been committed that honourable, but most arduous and responsible office—the office of forming the minds and habits of our rising ministry. On me it is severely incumbent neither to lay nor permit to be laid, in so far as I can hinder it, any stumbling-block before their feet. What is the fact? They hear me urge parochial duties as indispensable. They know that I perform none. They, at the same time, see my congregation apparently flourishing. What is likely to be the present conclusion? Manifestly this: either that I do not believe my own declarations, or that supposing me to be sincere, I over-rate the value of parochial duties. What is likely to be the future result? Manifestly this: supposing that any of them should neglect their own charges, they will comfort themselves by quoting me. They will remember the general fact, and will forget the circumstances which render it no precedent for their imitation. They will also be tempted to hold in light estimation the sacredness of their ordination-vows, one of which expressly promises diligence in parochial work. And thus, in the very act of betraying their trust, they will endeavour to quiet their consciences by pleading the example of their instructor to justify their treason. No example of mine must afford any colour for such an abuse.

* * * * * * * *

"Me, Sir, nothing can take by surprise. I am alike prepared for success or for defeat. I am prepared to see our holiest interests flourish, and to see them languish—prepared to see our budding hope, our little Seminary, branch out its honours, shed abroad its foliage, and multiply its fruits; or withered, from the blossom to the root, by the deadly east-wind of prejudice and parsimony—prepared to see the men who shall refuse their becoming offerings to build up the temple of the Lord of Hosts, put their money in a bag with holes: sow much and reap little: their fortunes scattered to the winds of heaven; and the iniquity of their covetousness or of their passion visited upon their children's children. The flying roll wherein is written "mourning and lamentation, and woe," passes swiftly over the nations—I hear the portentous roaring of wild misrule. I see approaching the cloud of desolation which is to rain down upon the slumbering churches its tempest of brimstone and salt. My heart is pained within me.

"For myself, an atom in the sum of things, God can do as well without me as with me. The paramount desire of my soul is to proclaim that Saviour whom I hope to meet in the clouds of heaven; and to assist in rearing up young heralds of his truth, who shall fight his battles and bear his glory when my feeble voice shall be heard no more, and my clay shall mingle with its kindred earth. I thank my Lord for all the goodness and mercy which have followed me to this day. But if the hand which has lifted me up is about to cast me down—'If he shall thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.'"

Dr. Mason's request was granted: and on Friday the 25th of May, he was released from his pastoral charge.

The plan which he had in his mind when he resigned his charge, was the formation of a third church, and in serving it to be assisted by a colleague. This was disclosed in a confidential communication to one of his former students, then become an able preacher in Kentucky:—

DR. M. TO THE REV. J. McCHORD.

New York, 16th March, 1810.

My Dear McChord: My very soul is grieved by the dismal picture, which your but too faithful narrative has drawn, of Christian affairs in Kentucky. I did not suspect that our information from that quarter had been so far short of the facts. But on this you may always calculate, with the utmost certainty, that men of timid minds will never look at disagreeable truth themselves, nor let others look at it, if they can avoid it. Concealment is one of their invariable resources. They hold on in the absurd expectation that something will turn up to extricate them. Something does "turn up" in reality; but almost always something which makes bad still worse for them. I did, however, suspect that matters could not go on long without a management different from what the nature of the case had, for several years, admitted. I did not suspect, and was confident that the general laws of human things would produce without speedy relief, some deplorable results in your unhappy region. The effect must be proportioned to the cause. But not having, as I now perceive, the whole truth before me, I had hoped that your and Crother's appearance would have fixed the check-pin; and that a better order would commence. But I see with grief that the mischief had gone too far. Your facts are decisive, and if they were not, this mad migration to the Floridas would render them so. I discern nothing for it but to call in our outposts, and strengthen our centre. Happy will it be if we shall be allowed to maintain our own; and affirm even that my conviction grows every day that horrible desolation awaits the Christian interests in our land; and that if we mean to do anything to purpose, we must abandon the plan of scattering, and come close together. I tremble at the anticipation that all, or nearly all, the Western country will be brutalized and paganized; will be a huge theatre of barbarity, of rapine, of profligacy, of Atheism, and that we shall have in these United States, millions of white heathen, the offspring of our own bowels, as destitute of the Gospel of life and immortality as the Missouri Indians. For *you*, my dear McChord, your present is not a proper scene of action. Your talents will be lost, your spirits dissipated, and your heart broken, in a fruitless effort to stem an irresistible torrent. I trust that better things are in store for you. I have a request to make, which I reckon with confidence on your granting. Do not think of settling, nor encourage a call from any place whatever without consulting me. My reason is this: On the evening of the 13th instant I announced to my congregation my intention of resigning my pastoral charge on the 16th of May next, when our Presbytery is to meet at Newburgh. I did it because I must be devoted to the general interests of the church, and cannot discharge parochial duties. The impression was strong. The result, I believe, will be that a *third* church will be set up in which I shall *preach*, but in which also there will be another minister to be the *pastor* as well as to preach. Now, my dear McChord, my heart is set upon you. We cannot do without you. You will be comfortably provided for. The old church will not be abandoned. They, too, will turn their eyes to you. Mr. Annan shortly removes from Baltimore. *There* also is a project for calling you. I pray you to visit us, if possible, soon. Mind not a small, nor even a considerable sacrifice; it will be made up. But I feel that I have the first claim. Remember my request. Grace be with you. My love to your beloved. Believe me to be, my dear McChord, with much and tender affection,

Yours, &c.,

J. M. MASON.

As soon as the Doctor's purpose respecting a third church became known, the public mind was relieved from the sensation produced by the startling announcement of his intention to resign. As far as Washington at least, very pleasant anticipations were immediately cherished, as is indicated by a note on the subject from an excellent man residing in that city:—

TO THE REV. DR. MASON, NEW YORK.

City of Washington, 9th April, 1810.

My Dear Friend: The reports have been various, and no small share of interest excited to know the reasons for your intended resignation of your charge; amongst the number Mr. Madison. But we are now relieved, and the idea of your having further usefulness in view, confirmed.

The addition of another congregation to the connexion in the city of New York, will I doubt not be the means in the hands of the great Shepherd of Israel, of gathering many sheep into his fold. How pleasing the contemplation that some may be brought in who are now in darkness and under the power of Satan. May the bread of Life, John vi. 35–40, nourish many souls who are yet strangers to the Commonwealth of Israel! Those verses have of late more especially been the food of my soul. But I must not intrude on your time. The occasion of this, is to express an interest in everything which concerns you, and in proof of my great Christian affection. My affectionate respects to your family. Dear Sir,

Yours truly,
JOSEPH NOURSE.

In another quarter, other hopes were entertained, as appears from the following communication, written at a great distance from the author's residence:—

TO THE REV. DR. MASON.

Charleston, S. C., April 25th, 1810.

My Dear Sir: The intelligence of your resignation of your pastoral office has reached this city, and with it the proper explanations from some friends. The hand of the Lord is in this, I trust for good, both to you and His church. May He make your duty, and your future course plain before you. If your plans are not already formed, and you can suspend, till I see you next month, your determination, as to your future course, I pray you to do it. Perhaps Providence intends Boston, Andover, or Cambridge, as the scene of your labours. Here you know is a wide and a most important field of usefulness. Should your way be directed thither, my heart would be encouraged, more than you can imagine, to go home and renew my labours with you in that part of the vineyard of our Lord, which is so awfully overrun with errors, and torn by divisions. I hope your views have been toward Boston; if not, turn them I pray you, seriously that way.

Our friend Abeel is here, with somewhat better health; but still unable to preach. His complaint is obstinate. He proposes to go shortly to Norfolk by water, and thence by land. I hope to be in New York about the 20th of next month.

Accept for yourself and Mrs. Mason, the kind regards of Mrs. Morse and myself, and believe me truly your friend and brother,

J. MORSE.

Though a formal application was made to the Presbytery of Kentucky in behalf of Mr. McChord for permission to visit New York, it was refused. Thus thrown into new perplexity, he writes to Dr. Mason, whom he styles his "father," for advice; informing him, that Mr. Bishop had offered to relinquish to him a place of his own; and also that he might take charge of an academy in Ohio, and at the same time preach. To this the Doctor replied:—

DR. M. TO THE REV. JAMES McCHORD.

NEW YORK, 25th Dec., 1810.

MY DEAR McCHORD: Two days ago I received with surprise and grief your letter of the 3rd. I had fully counted upon seeing you in the course of next month, and upon the commencement of great benefit from your arrival to the interest of the churches. The disappointment, as proceeding from the agency of man, has nothing mysterious in it; as proceeding at this juncture from the providence of God, it is somewhat dark. But I wish not to repine. He does all things well; and he will enable us to see in due time, how he has done *this* well. Submission is not only duty, but it is happiness; and there is no scene so fit to display the power of faith as the "valley of the shadow of death." "Fear not," my dear James, "only believe." We have a guide whose eye is the fountain of light, and whose arm supports us with the patience of love.

My views relative to your transfer, instead of being changed, are confirmed by what has happened. If you must forsake your own country and your father's house, as from your representations it is clear you must—if you must go to a land of strangers, why not bend your course to a station where you may combine extensive service to your Master's kingdom, with the soothing of your own spirit, and the promotion of your domestic comfort? I have long ago done with that absurd knight-errantry which courts useless mortification. Its mimic generosity, and its glare of heroism, which once seduced me, seduce me no more. But it requires experience to persuade an ardent imagination, that a barber's basin is not a helmet; and that bulls and windmills are not giants. One will get no more thanks from God or man for embracing misery which he may lawfully shun, or making sacrifices which he may honourably decline, than for flagellating his back into ulcers, when he may be quite as religious in a whole skin. I am glad that your first lessons have not been thrown away upon you, and that you have declared against such silly fanaticism.

Should your "valley of Achor" be turned into "a door of hope," something not unlike a miracle, so far as I can perceive, must effect the conversion. The habits of a country are fastidious and stubborn. They are not to be argued down. They will decay and moulder under a million changes in the atmosphere, but they mock the edge of the axe. You may *sap* them; you cannot *storm* them. Nor are they to be blown up by a flash of zeal. In your Western regions, and in too many others, they are lamentably hostile to a decent provision for the ministry. They may be improved, but not in season for *you*. Time will bleach your head, and death gather you to your fathers, before the accomplishment of such a revolution. Do not feed yourself with fallacious hope. The talents of an angel cannot destroy the connexion between cause and effect. Impressive novelty, like the torpedo-eel, may benumb for a moment the sensations of avarice, and the rough arm of vulgarity, but when the shock is spent, the reaction will be as strong as ever. During the interval, large promises, honest enough at the time, may entrap the unwary, and will leave him, when unfulfilled, to mourn without sympathy; to remonstrate without effect; or to resist through a tempest of hatred, of reproach, and of persecution. The expedient proposed by Mr. Bishop is the effusion of a generous and noble heart. It is worthy of his magnanimity and of your gratitude; yet it ought not to be accepted unless forced upon you by an act of God's providence. It is but temporary at best; and a thousand accidents may happen during the limited period, to render it a source of vexation and calamity to you both.

Do not, by premature haste, lose more than you gain. Try if more cannot be ultimately accomplished for the West by the indirect operation of your labours on a suitable scale, than by their direct effects on a scale which will diminish their range and cripple their activity. We must not lose, but guard and fortify what we have already won. We must put the heart into strong action, if we mean to promote the health of the extremities. It is here in this city, that the great battle is to be fought. It is here that the question is to be decided, whether a fountain of light and life is to play with its refreshing power over our land, or whether Death is to walk like the pestilence in darkness, and to multiply, unseen, his hecatombs of victims. It is here that we want our masculine talent, our brawny arms; our Macedonian phalanx; our Roman discipline.

My kindest regards to your bosom friend. Blessings from the Father of Mercies upon that little one whom He has caused to instruct you in the feelings of a father's heart. And, since you have seen fit to put my memorial upon him, may the God who has fed me all my life long unto this day—my father's God—the Angel who redeemed my soul out of trouble—bless the lad, and render him a father's glory and a mother's joy.

Ever your affectionate,

J. M. MASON.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

1810—1811.

PSALMODY, COMMERCIAL DISTRESS, CHINESE MISSION, ETC.

Letter from E. Clark, Esq.—Letter to the same—Letter to J. Davenport, Esq. —Letter to the Rev. Dr. A. Proudfit—Letter to Mrs. E. Sleight—Letter to Mr. E. Mason, Edinburgh—Letter to Mrs. Brown—Letter from the Rev. R. Morrison, Canton.

THE subject of psalmody was one which deeply affected the interests and prospects of all the Scottish churches in America. Under the force of their new circumstances, it was impossible for them always to retain those particular modes of praising God which they had brought with them from the "old countries." Their mixture, more and more in successive generations, with Christians of different origin, could not possibly admit of a permanent separation in this particular. A rigid adherence to established customs must necessarily doom them to an ultimate extinction. The Associate Reformed Church had already lost a whole Presbytery. Their congregation in Montreal was strongly tending in the same direction. In every part of New York, where there was not a very preponderating Scotch element and influence, the same thing was visible. On the other hand, in many churches, especially in the far West and South, the subject could not be touched, without "touching the apple of their eye." Habit, custom, antiquity, religious prepossessions, the sweet memories of their "father land," the sacred associations of ancestral worship, all arrayed themselves against a change; and subsequent events, in many cases and in many forms, have demonstrated how deep-rooted was the prejudice to be encountered. Under such circumstances, though a change could not be proposed without great hazard, it had yet become necessary. This necessity was well understood by Dr. Mason, and omens in its favour arising in an unexpected quarter, as communicated in a letter from a very intelligent Elder of Argyle, in the county of Washington, N. Y., were gladly received. His views appear without disguise in the answer which he returned. Neither the letter nor the answer will be read with indifference by those who understand how certain churches are affected by questions of this nature :—

TO THE REV. DR. MASON.

ARGYLE, March 12, 1810.

DEAR SIR: Since I last had the pleasure of seeing you here I have frequently reflected on the subject of psalmody. The more I have reflected, the more have I become convinced that something must be done. Experience has taught me, that any attempt to correct existing evils, or to meliorate our condition, is sure to meet with opposition; and first of all from those who, though within the pale of the church, are indifferent about her best interests till they find something to quarrel about. Then they are all fire and zeal.

In order to bring the subject before the people and to awaken thought and inquiry, as well as to take from the back of the Synod and its ministers the blame of novelty or defection, in case a new version was attempted, I thought it prudent last fall to introduce the subject, by way of conversation, before our Session. Shortly after I drew up a petition, addressed to the Presbytery, requesting them to petition the Synod to furnish the church with a metre version of the Scripture Psalms, Hymns, and Songs, adapted to the present condition of the church and the improved state of the English language. This encountered opposition, but not to the extent which I had feared. Many of the most serious and judicious were in favour of the design.

Whether the petition will be ready in time with a competent number of signers, to be presented to the next Synod, I know not. But my principal purpose will be effected—that of getting the people to discuss the subject, and be prepared, in some measure, for what the Synod may deem proper.

I sent a copy of the petition to Salem, where it was generally well received, and even by the oldest members of that Session. I also sent a copy of it to the Rev. James Mairs; and he received it at a time when Mr. McCauley, Mr. Wilson, and Mr. R. Poudfit, were at his house. He wrote me that they all concurred in the design cordially. All the ministers whom I have seen concur; but the people must be waited upon.

My intention in writing you now is to obtain your opinion on the expediency of circulating the petition beyond the limits of the two Presbyteries here. Mr. G. Mairs has suggested the thought of having a few copies printed, so that the people might have it more extensively in their hands. Before this is done, I would wish your correcting hand to pass upon it. Please to give me, by mail, your views on the whole subject.

Most affectionately, I am yours,

EBEN. CLARK.

TO E. CLARK, Esq.

New York, 23d March, 1810.

My Dear Sir: Two days ago I received your interesting letter of the 12th inst. The subject of an improved version of psalmody has long occupied my thoughts, athough, until very lately, I have spoken of it with reserve. I am fully persuaded that the decisive moment is at hand when we must make our election between the adoption of this measure, and the ruin of our churches from Montreal to Washington. Our present version is, in every direction, the great obstacle to our progress. It hangs with the weight of a mill-stone round our necks, and we must either get rid of the mill-stone, or go with it to the bottom. The crisis is just before us; and it is the part of wise men to anticipate its approach. *Generally*, we must *Americanize* our churches; that is, must adapt the great and immoveable principles of church order to the circumstances of our own country. Native habits will swallow up foreign habits, as infallibly as national language swallows up a foreign one. We have nothing before us but to assimilate, in prudential arrangements, to these habits, or to be swept away. I have not now leisure to enter upon a calculation of the probable results. They have long ago passed through my mind, and cannot, I believe, be otherwise than favourable. I should like to converse with you at length on the subject: and am particularly solicitous that you should attend both the particular and general Synods in May. It is of moment that on a question of this sort a right decision should be given by *old-country* delegates. I pray you not to disappoint us, as you did last year. In the mean time I am glad the business is started. Go on. Let it come before the particular Synod at Newburgh. Our Presbytery, I imagine, will be unanimous. If it come before the General Synod in the shape of an overture from the Synod of New York, it will make a deep impression. I have been musing on the proper way of *starting* it, when your letter announced its actual commencement among *the people.* This is the best possible mode. It would not do for me to put my hand to the petition. The patching might be detected, and would create suspicion where there is in reality no cause for it. The plainer the representation the better. It will bear internal marks of its having been, *bona fide*, a thing of the people; which, in this case, is of the first utility.

I am, dear Sir, with much respect, yours, &c.

J. M. MASON.

As might have been anticipated from the preceding correspondence, the subject of Psalmody was brought before the next Synod; a judicious report on it was prepared, and the following resolution unanimously adopted:—

"Resolved, That Drs. Mason and Gray, with Messrs. John X. Clark, James M. Mathews, and Alexander Proudfit, be and hereby are appointed a Committee to procure an improved version of scriptural psalmody; and to have the same in readiness for such order as the General Synod shall see meet to take at the next stated meeting."

At this Synod, the Board of Superintendents reported nineteen students, and declared themselves "highly gratified with the result of their examination on the different branches of study prescribed in the plan of the Seminary."

At the same meeting, Dr. Mason's "Letter on Ministers' Salaries," which is found in the fourth volume of his printed works, was, with little alteration, adopted by the Synod.

DR. M. TO THE HON. J. DAVENPORT, CONNECTICUT.

NEW YORK, 16th Feb. 1810.

MY DEAR SIR: Some of the most grateful hours of my life have been spent in the bosom of your amiable and interesting family. I have often mentioned it as one upon which the Father of mercies has shed down in a very observable manner, the spirit of peace, of kindness, and of domestic love; and what is still better, the spirit of his grace. Yes, dear Sir, I have rejoiced in your joy, with strong although silent emotion, in beholding your order and your happiness. And now, that it has pleased the same Father of mercies to call you to mourn over an affecting breach in your family circle, allow me the privilege of mingling my tears with theirs. There is nothing in the religion of the Gospel to blunt the affections, or to stifle the voice of nature. Jesus wept; and so may we. He has consecrated the throes of the heart under sore privations; and while he has not forbidden us to testify how dear his gifts were to us by our grief at losing them, he has furnished us with the firmest supports, and the richest consolations, under the weight and anguish of our bereavements. It is in the hour of sorrow that his blessed Gospel comes home to the bosom with blessings redoubled. Do you not find it to be so? Yes, I know you have found, and still find it. Your Theodosia is removed—"not lost," however, but "gone before;" and in the midst of dying comforts, you learn more powerfully the sweetness of that triumph, "I know that my *Redeemer liveth!*" Such an assurance is at all times, and under all circumstances of misfortune, a refuge for the labouring spirit of which no man can conjecture the solace who has not tried it. Had your beloved daughter left you in a way and with prospects infinitely less soothing than she did, it would still have been to you a living source of acquiescence and of refreshment—that the God of salvation is *your* God. But, my friend, how unutterably delightful, how divinely elevating, the thought, the hope, the unwavering confidence, that she has exchanged *your* society for the society of the spirits of the just, of the holy ones who ministered to her even here for *their* society in the presence, the fruition, and the glory of that God of Salvation! Gone? Yes, gone. But whither? Even to that abode to which we expect in due season to follow her! To that one friend whom our souls love, who has tasted of death, and extracted with his own blessed lips all its bitterness before he allowed it to touch the lips of your departed daughter—to JESUS, "the Resurrection and the Life!" He had higher claims to your Theodosia than the claims of a father's wishes, or a mother's bowels—the claim of his ransoming blood. He has asserted his claims in your late affliction. "Father," is his authoritative prayer, "Father, I WILL that those whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory," It is an answer to this prayer which has carried your Theodosia to Heaven. Surely, surely, you do not, you cannot, permit a single pulsation of your heart to be polluted with a murmur. The mercy of her "dying in faith," is so great, so paramount a favour, that the pain of separation, and the vacancy created by her absence, do not deserve a mention—especially when you consider that you shall see her again. But how, how shall you see her? In that reduced and emaciated form which you consigned to the purified grave? No! Her "mortal shall put on immortality:" her "corruption, incorruption!" You shall see her in the alertness, the vigour, the resplendent beauty of that mysterious transformation which shall clothe her with a spiritual body over which Death shall have no power. Come, my Christian friend, with your sorrowing consort and children, dry up your tears, and sing of that mercy which has afforded you such abundant cause of joy in this tribulation! It is ours to be ready and be watchful. May the compassions, the tender compassions of the Lord our God, bind up your broken hearts; sanctify to all of you the rod of correction, and teach you to kiss the gracious hand which applies it. It is a rod from the tree of life, in the hand of the Prince of life: and applied for the furtherance of our meetness for eternal life. Assure Mrs. D. and your family of my sympathy, and believe me to be with much regard, your friend in *that* Beloved.

J. M. MASON.

The following note shows in what spirit Dr. Mason received a young minister, whose labours in New York have not disappointed the anticipations of his most sanguine friends:—

DR. M. TO THE REV. DR. PROUDFIT.

New York, Aug. 13, 1810.

My Dear Brother: The Rev. Mr. S. handed me your letter from Andover of the 11th July, this morning. I shall take pleasure in befriending and encouraging so promising a young servant of our common Lord as that gentleman is represented to be. He was ordained to his charge in the brick church last Wednesday. I have long been of opinion that Christianity gains nothing by the distance which has been kept up between those who have obtained "like precious faith." I wish that much of our zeal, not excluding our own body, may not turn out to be zeal for party instead of purity, and some portion of our structure may not be wood and stubble rather than gold and precious stones. I think, however, that the spirit of religious faction is gradually wearing away. I rejoice to see it, and shall cheerfully help on, *pro modulo meo*, so desirable a consummation. Yours affectionately,

J. M. MASON.

DR. M. TO MRS. E. SLEIGHT, NEWBURGH.

New York, 9th Oct., 1810.

My Dear Madam: I received on the Lord's day the melancholy tidings which confirmed all the apprehensions of your friends respecting your dear boy. On this singularly afflicting dispensation, permit me to mingle my sorrows with yours. A mother's heart, I know, has tendernesses which belong to no other; and of the loss of an only and most promising child, none can conjecture the pain but those who have felt it. I write not to infuse fresh bitterness into your cup. Your own bosom, alas, is full, is overflowing. I would fain draw you from the agonizing contemplation of what you once had, to the supporting contemplation of what you still have. Far be it from my endeavours or my wishes to arrest the yearnings of parental bowels. There is nothing in Christianity to chide, far less to stifle, the emotions of nature. Tears are a gracious relief to the bursting heart; let them flow; and blessings on them as they flow. Our Lord Jesus wept; He has consecrated our tears; and we, too, will weep, when He gives us such abundant reason. Our friend, our father, our *Heavenly* Father, has done it; and He has reasons for it which, if He thought fit to explain them, would satisfy even ourselves. He bids you and your mourning husband to look at *His* hand in this bereavement. There will be, there can be, no solid consolation, till your spirits bow before His sovereignty and confess that He doeth *all* things well. It is then, and then only, that our painful wounds are bound up, when we have recourse to the Holy One who has smitten us. Surely your heart has this recourse. Surely, you find him your "refuge and your strength, a *very present* help in trouble." Ah, my grieving friend, what would be your situation if you had no reconciled God to whom you could pour out your moan? The world, with all its promises, has no prescription for a broken heart. How deep the shade, which in this hour of woe, passes over and rests upon its glories! How insipid the enjoyments for which the sons and daughters of gaiety unceasingly pant! Now is the time for trying what your religion is made of. Now, your Lord is putting your love to the test! Is asking, in a way awfully intelligible, whether you believe in His goodness when He sends upon you one of those calamities from which in a particular manner your soul shrinks? You have often given up your son to Him, and He has taken you at your word. "There he lies," said good old Fenelon, of his beloved pupil, the Dauphin of France, "there he lies, and with him all my earthly hope; but if the moving of a straw could bring him back, without the will of my Father in Heaven, I would not be the mover of that straw for a thousand worlds." Was not this as it became a believer in Christ? Can your heart go along with the unmurmuring sufferer, and apply his declaration to your departed Hugh? It is the grace of the Lord Jesus that enables us to glory in tribulation. He has some end to answer, for which you will yet praise Him. In the mean time, *He* is left; and none can be poor or substantially miserable who have *Him* as their portion. You cannot, I think, either you or your husband, forget *this* lesson, that nothing which *can die* is a suitable portion for an immortal soul. You believe it. You have chosen, I trust, as your portion, the *Resurrection and the Life.* Hushed, then, be thy tumults; moderate thy griefs—the darkness breaks away—the light of the morning begins to dawn. Sweet and cheering, and not unknown to thee, is that blessed voice, "Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will answer thee." Let the rod drive thee to the mercy seat—to the fulness of grace and truth in our ascended Redeemer—to that holy and victorious hope which shall survive our sorrows, and triumph, even over Death. It is but a little while, and our Lord "shall perfect that which concerneth us." Our business is to watch, and look up; "For our Redemption draweth nigh." Our God has promised, that "all things shall work together for good to them that love Him." "He is *faithful* that promised." Say to Him, "*Do* as thou hast *said*." And He will enable you to acknowledge, "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are just, and that in *faithfulness* thou hast afflicted me." My heart's desire and prayer to Him is that He would support you "with the right hand of his righteousness;" and comfort with His "consolations which are neither few nor small." "Die who will," said a Christian parent, as he committed to the grave the *last two* of a flourishing family, who had all grown up, and were all suddenly cut down, "Die who will, the Lord lives! Blessed be my Rock! the God of my salvation be praised!" It is *well*. Yes, it *is* well! Your God, I hope, will make you feel it to be so; and will speedily turn the shadow of death into the morning.

I am, my dear Madam, yours, &c., sincerely.

J. M. MASON.

In the progress of events Dr. Mason very considerably changed his opinions respecting those two countries of Europe with which our own has its most important relations—England and France. The causes of this change are given by himself in a letter to his uncle of Dec. 1st, 1810: "Our redoubtable embargo seems to have suspended the operations of friendship along with those of commerce. Do not judge me too harshly even if I seem to have participated in the benumbing influence of our political palsy. Silence is not forgetfulness, although forgetfulness is silent. Had my pen been as busy as my imagination, the postage of my letters would have devoured a fortune. My spirit has been with you in all your trials; my heart shares in your losses; I hope it shares in your consolations also. Would that we could yet see each other in the land of our pilgrimage! Nothing but my public engagements hinders my enjoyment of that blessing. My bosom yearns, with increased longing, to visit once more the natal soil of my father; the house of an uncle who was in the place of a father; and friends who, if anything earthly, would cause me to forget my kindred elsewhere, and my father's house. My mind has undergone in the course of fifteen years an absolute revolution in its feelings toward Great Britain. Formerly, through the power of resentments and prejudices growing out of the war, I disliked her almost to hatred. General reasoning, combined with facts which appealed to my heart, taught me to respect her. Her firmness and dignity, in her glorious struggle for all that is valuable to man, have filled me with veneration; and her unexampled efforts to diffuse the light of life among the dying nations, attract my love. Eternal blessings on the abode of sober and gallant liberty! on the spot where the tabernacle of God condescends, in a peculiar manner, to dwell with men!

"In the negotiations of 1809, Mr. Erskine was undoubtedly the dupe of our cabinet. They are now, in turn, the dupe of France. We have no prospect but that of a renewal of non-intercourse with Great Britain in consequence of the insidious declarations of Bonaparte about the repeal of the Berlin and Milan Decrees. Your old foxes understand the trap, and avoid it. Our young ones, less shy, have been caught. It will be far better with them than they have any right to expect, if they get a little wisdom at the expense of losing their tails."

A few weeks later, viz., 26th Jan. 1811, he thus describes the commercial embarrassment of New York: "The city presents a melancholy spectacle. All is confusion, consternation and dismay. The best and firmest houses fall in rapid succession. Confidence is gone. No one trusts his neighbour. No one can tell who is to sink next. The man who counts himself affluent at breakfast, dees not know whether he shall not be a bankrupt before dinner. An universal crash is looked for. Whether the Insurance Companies, or the Banks themselves, shall weather the gale, no mortal can tell."

On the 12th April following he writes to his uncle: "Our Seminary goes on in usefulness and reputation. It now wants little but funds. In a few weeks it will be in debt to the Treasurer £450 sterling. The grudge with which most men part with a little pittance for the noblest purposes, is astonishing and humiliating. Mammon, Mammon, is the god of the professing world among us. The love of distinction flows in the channels of wealth, and thus creates an aristocracy, the most feeble and enfeebling, the most corrupt and corrupting, the most slavish and enslaving of all aristocracies—the aristocracy of Dollars. Hence the passion for lucre is the passion of the United States. Men measure their respectability not by their deeds of goodness, but by the sums of which they are masters. In Massachusetts there are noble exceptions. Several individuals have given from 10,000 to 40,000 dollars each, to a Theological Seminary at Andover, twenty miles north of Boston. With us there is nothing which bears the most distant resemblance to this munificence."

Even princes cannot always appear in state. If a great monarch could once excuse himself to an ambassador at his court, when caught mingling on the floor in the sports of his children, by an appeal to his parental feelings, we need not apologize for presenting a family scene in which a fond parent appears in all the unsophisticated simplicity of nature. Certainly no one ever took greater satisfaction in occasionally unbending and relaxing among the exuberant spirits of his happy children, than Dr. Mason; and in no circle of family connexions were there ever stronger feelings of affection. Unexpectedly he had received a letter from his beloved and honoured sister, Mrs. Brown, from whom he had been long and far separated, announcing her intention to come with two of her children to spend the winter in New York. The joy which the tidings brought into his house he thus describes :—

DR. M. TO MRS. M. BROWN.

MINETTO, NEAR GREENWICH, 2d Oct., 1810.

MY DEAR SISTER: You might well anticipate the pleasure which your letter of the 8th ult. was calculated to give us. The intelligence of your intended visit was so unexpected, that the hope of embracing you and the dear little ones under our roof, after your absence of more than ten years, was almost too powerful in its joy. I handed the letter to Nancy, after preparing her by the exclamation of News! News! Her curiosity was only awake in expecting some not very uncommon family occurrence. But when she got to the second sentence, she turned pale, her heart swelled and she obtained relief in a flood of tears. As soon as she was sufficiently composed to proceed, a fresh flood followed the notice of your boy and girl. Having recovered her tranquillity, it became the children's turn. Their raptures were of a more boisterous sort. Snapping fingers, skipping, dancing, talking loud all together—at least the boys—and disputing, almost crying, about having Mason for a bedfellow. But why could you not bring Orlando? And let us round off the ten young "elephants" around the table? I shall certainly, if a kind Providence allow, meet you in Pennsylvania.

Our love to Mr. Brown and the children. Mamma is well. Nancy as usual. The little ones (some of them pretty *big* little ones), in high health and spirits. The God of our father bless my sister, and conduct her with comfort to the abode and the bosom of her affectionate brother!

J. M. MASON.

The man who has opened the fountain of knowledge and salvation to a nation of 300,000,000, in their successive generations, can never fail of being regarded as an object of sublime interest. The obstacles and discouragements which he encountered in pursuing his end, cannot diminish that interest. The faith which imparts sufficient energy for struggling through such difficulties and for finally accomplishing the great result, must be admitted to be a mighty principle. Considerations of this sort must forever secure a respectful attention to the communications of the first evangelical missionary from England to China. The following letter moreover presents a fair picture of the Heathen mind, not only in China but in other regions of the East:—

TO THE REV. DR. MASON.

CANTON, November 10th, 1809.

REV. AND DEAR SIR: I was favoured by yours of May 18th, 1809, on the arrival of the ship *Trident* at this place. By the same conveyance I received six Magazines, for which I beg leave to return you my most cordial thanks. In this distant land, separated from the society of God's people—without the comfortable and quickening exercises of social worship, letters and religious publications are more interesting and beneficial than Ministers and Christians seem aware of. To perceive the truth of this, I am persuaded that it is enough to mention it.

As yet, I have none from amongst the heathen who take part with me in the faith and hope of the Gospel. They are sometimes brought to acknowledge the truth of what I say, but remain careless. It is rarely that I can bring them to be serious. Their own superstitions sit remarkably light upon their minds. Whenever they speak of their rites or opinions, the smile of levity and ridicule is upon their countenance. They manifest strongly, the desirableness and necessity of a Revelation. They cannot rid themselves of the idea of an hereafter—of rewards and punishments, but I have not seen an instance of a serious and powerful conviction of the truth of those things. There is doubt and uncertainty predominant in their minds, which prevent their notions from having much influence on their moral conduct.

Kung-fu-tsi (Confucius) does not bring the sanction of future rewards and punishments, to give weight to his precepts. Good or bad fame, prosperity or adversity in the present life, are the strongest sanctions which I have found in his books. Those with whom I converse, have frequently said that good or bad fame were their highest considerations. Yet they acknowledge that Heaven (by which they express some crude idea of superior powers), does not pass unnoticed the crimes of men. It was urged—"You must know that many whose names are buried in the deepest obscurity, have been guilty of the most heinous crimes—of murder, &c.; is it then to you credible that Heaven has no means of punishing them?" By this they were silenced.

So of an atonement, which they think unnecessary, (because Confucius has said nothing about it), they acknowledged that it might be requisite for heinous offenders, but not so in common cases.

A general prejudice by which they ward off every new truth, is, that it is incredible we should know better than they do, since they are much more ancient, wise, and polished, than we are.

I was made to rejoice when I heard that brothers Gordon and Lee had been employed in America; and more when I heard that they were proceeding to the station appointed for them. Report leads me to suppose that their reception in India will not be favourable. But we trust in the Lord, and "go forward."

My labours have hitherto and will yet be only those of the student of language. My application to the language of this country has been unremitted, and I have made some progress. The difficulties, you know, are many; and the impossibility of obtaining the best assistance is not the least. I have for the last ten months fulfilled the duties of Chinese translator to the Honourable Company's servants here. This for the present secures my stay, affords me support, and does not hinder my application to the language, but makes it still more a duty. It is all in the way of my great object. And my beloved Mary and myself look upon it as a gracious interposition of Providence in our behalf. We have both of us been indisposed, and yet continue to be so. Yet our hope is in the Lord; that whether we do or suffer his will, he may be glorified.

This Province is at present infested by a fleet of pirates, whose force is very great, and who put to defiance the established government. They have made some underhand application to the English against the pirates. The English, however, decline interfering unless the Viceroy comes forward and makes the request.

I sometimes converse with converts from amongst the Chinese to the Romish communion. Their ignorance is lamentable. Some of them do not know of the existence of the Sacred Scriptures. The Mass-book is in their hands, collections of pretended miracles, and legendary tales. In talking with them, I feel the want of the "Law and the Testimony," to which to refer them to convince them of the errors of prayers to holy men and holy women, which they have in great abundance.

The Romish Priests at Macao have forbidden their converts, to have any fellowship with me, or to teach me the language.

In Macao, therefore, I do not see any of them, but here in Canton, they sometimes call on me.

The Heathen consider the Romish ceremonies as the counterpart of the sect of Foé.

Committing you to the all-sufficient Redeemer for the supply of all your need,

I remain yours in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ,
And in the hope of eternal life through him.
R. MORRISON.

The generosity of Dr. Mason's heart was manifested on many occasions. His regard for money was small indeed in comparison with his regard for objects of public utility, or of charity. The ardour of his feelings sometimes prevented due discrimination, and almost blinded him to the inconveniences to which he himself would be subjected by the free indulgence of them. In one instance, during the present year, in order to relieve a minister who was in debt to the amount of $1700, he offered to assume $700 of it, if a certain relative of the minister, who could better afford it, would assume the remainder. It is believed, however, that the offer was declined; and it may well have been, for sufficient reasons.

Further indications of his generous disposition may be seen in a letter from one who had shared its fruits. A short extract follows:—

"My Very Dear Friend: I have taken up the pen to acknowledge your last favour, but confess I am at a loss for expression to convey the sentiments that favour excited. My heart has long owned you as a friend, who, like the blessed Master you serve and imitate, 'sticketh closer than a brother,' and whose active friendship has sought out, and kindly improved many occasions of affording me comfort or pleasure. Many instances of affectionate solicitude for my welfare (by you, perhaps, forgotten), are to me the subject of frequent pleasing recollections; and the important benefit I have of late derived from your kindness, proves a source of grateful feeling, which I have never been able sufficiently to express. But this new instance leaves me quite a bankrupt in acknowledgment.

I can only love and bless you for your care and goodness. I would thank you, too, for the pleasure afforded me by your assurance, that affection as well as principle suggested the kindness. To one, who like me, feels the consciousness of having but small claims on the regard of others, it is a peculiar satisfaction to contemplate the partial relative in the liberal benefactor."

CHAPTER XXIX.

1811—1812.

INTERCOMMUNION, ETC.

The question introduced into the Synod—A Committee appointed—Their Report—Dr. Mason's Speech—Dissatisfaction in Kentucky—A Special Meeting of the Scioto Synod—Its injurious Influence—Tuscarora Mission—Letter to the Rev. W. McMurray.

A SUBJECT, which in some of its aspects has occupied a previous chapter, was, in another form and other connexions, introduced into the General Synod meeting at Philadelphia, in the Spring of 1811. Information was communicated respecting an incident which had made a great sensation throughout the Associate Reformed Church, and far beyond it. As it created something of an era in the history of various denominations, was followed by very important and lasting effects—and as it proved the occasion of one of Dr. Mason's best publications—it deserves to be given in detail. The whole subject cannot be better presented than in the following extracts from the minutes:—

"It was moved by Dr. Gray and Mr. Dick:

"Whereas reports are in circulation, and generally believed, that the Rev. Dr. John M. Mason, and the Rev. Messrs. James M. Mathews and John X. Clark, have entered into ministerial and Christian communion in another church, which has excited a great degree of dissatisfaction in several parts of our church; and whereas, it is the duty of this court to inquire into matters which affect the peace and unity of the church—therefore

"Resolved, that a committee be appointed to inquire into the truth of said report, and into the circumstances of the fact, if it shall prove to be a fact—with power to call for testimony—

and that they report to this Synod, as soon as convenient, that such order may be taken thereon as duty shall require.

"Carried.

"The Committee are Dr. Gray, Messrs. Mairs, Henderson, McChord, and McWilliams."

"May 23d.—The above Committee reported as follows:—

"That on consultation they were of opinion that the shortest way for gaining an accurate knowledge of the facts and circumstances in the case, was to inquire at the mouth of the brethren themselves. They were accordingly desired to attend a meeting of the Committee. They attended, and gave an unreserved, and it is believed, a *full* relation of their conduct respectively, so far as connected with said reports. The following is a brief outline of the statements then given:

"After Dr. Mason was released from the pastoral charge of the first congregation in the City of New York, and a part of that congregation was erected into a separate vacancy, to which he was appointed supply; it became necessary for this new congregation to obtain a place of meeting for their public worship. This they found no easy task; but were defeated in their attempts to procure a temporary accommodation, until the house which they contemplated building should be completed for their reception. At last the trustees of that Presbyterian church, of which Dr. Romeyn is pastor, granted the free use of their meeting house, at such times as did not interfere with the seasons of their own public worship. And Dr. Mason with the vacancy under his care, have since that time held their meetings in said house; assembling after the dismission of Dr. Romeyn's church on the Lord's day, both forenoon and afternoon.

"This circumstance introduced the two societies to the most intimate acquaintance, occasioned each frequently to wait on the ministrations of the pastor of the other; the consequence was a high degree of mutual affection, confidence and esteem. On the first occasion that Dr. Mason administered the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to his congregation, it was, on consultation with the Session, thought proper to admit Dr. Romeyn and his people to communion.

"When Dr. Romeyn next administered the Lord's Supper, an invitation was given to the people of Dr. Mason's charge to participate, and it was accepted.

"The intercommunion thus begun, has continued ever since. But it is not viewed by Dr. Mason, and the people of his charge, as anything else than the application of the principle expressed in Chapter XXVI., Section 2, of the Confession of Faith; nor as involving the question of communion with any other church than that one with which they are, in the providence of God, so peculiarly connected. Nor is it contemplated to continue, after they shall obtain a separate place of public worship, which they are making preparations to build.

"With respect to ministerial communion, the following is the fact: That a few Sabbaths since, Dr. Mason received an invitation from Dr. Romeyn, to conduct the public worship of his congregation, which he accepted; and on that occasion used the established order of worship in that church. Mr. Mathews, who has no pastoral charge, joined in the communion before stated, as a member of Dr. Mason's church; but has never held ministerial communion with any other than the Associate Reformed Church. He looks upon this as merely occasional communion, rendered proper by the peculiarity of circumstances; and not as involving the question of communion with any other congregation than that of Dr. Romeyn; nor with that under circumstances different from the present.

"The case of Mr. Clark is somewhat differently circumstanced. Being indisposed, and having engaged a brother minister to fill his pulpit, he went without previous concert to Dr. Miller's church; and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper being that day dispensed, he accepted an invitation and participated. He has never engaged in ministerial communion out of the Associate Reformed Church.

"On reviewing all these facts and circumstances, the Committee found itself involved in considerable difficulty. On the one hand they see no sufficient cause to depart from that restricted communion in the seals of the new covenant which has hitherto obtained in the Associate Reformed Church; much less can they approve of that vague and indiscriminate communion which prevails in different parts of the land, and which, by rendering the ascertainment of Christian principle and character impossible, tends to make men indifferent to the faith, piety, and righteousness of those whom they recognise as brethren in the Lord Jesus, and with whom they associate in the most solemn acts of religious worship. Also every thing tending to create jealousies, destroy confidence, and mar the peace and unity of the Associate Reformed church is deeply to be regretted.

"On the other hand, they cannot but acknowledge that the congregation in New York was placed in unusual circumstances. They were, in the holy providence of God, connected with the church of Dr. Romeyn by very tender ties; and they had full means of being morally satisfied respecting the faith and character of those with whom they were to hold communion. A declinature on their part to admit to their communion, those whom they sustained, on due means of knowledge, as brethren in Christ, with whom they were daily associating in other acts of religious worship, and who were displaying great tenderness and good offices toward them, might have chilled Christian love on both sides, led to invidious inquiries and altercations, and have exposed Christianity to derision in the eyes of its enemies. They must have anticipated, and *did anticipate*, that the step they were taking would create uneasiness in the breasts of their brethren in other parts of the country. Thus situated, it must have been painful for them to reflect, that act as they might, they must give dissatisfaction to some persons. It is for this Synod to judge whether under all the circumstances, the conduct of these ministers and that congregation was Christian and judicious, calculated to promote the interests of Christ's kingdom on the spot where the events took place; as also whether it was compatible with that regard to peace and harmony so incumbent on those connected by the solemn bond of ecclesiastical covenant.

"In regard to the ministerial communion which Dr. Mason held with Dr. Romeyn, the only circumstance which has created any displeasure is that of the psalmody used on the occasion.

"On Mr. Clark's conduct, the Committee cannot but look with disapprobation. They do not think it was his duty to neglect assembling with his own church, though another minster was to lead the public offices. And they cannot see tha the providence of God called him, on so casual an event as that of stepping into a church during the period of administering the Lord's Supper, to join in that holy ordinance, knowing as he must have done, that such conduct would displease and grieve a great portion of that part of the church of God with which he was connected; while a different conduct could give no offence to any part of the family of faith.

"All which is respectfully submitted.

"J. GRAY, Chairman.

"Saturday Morning.—It was moved by Messrs. Henderson* and Dick*:

"Whereas, it appears that Dr. Mason, Messrs. Mathews and Clark, have joined in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper with the Presbyterian Church of North America; and whereas, it also appears, that the Rev. John M. Mason, has ministerially joined with said Church in the use of psalms, the composition of which is merely human—all which being contrary to the established order of the Associate Reformed Church, and having a tendency to injure the cause of the Redeemer in their hands—therefore,

"Resolved—That the Synod do declare their decided disapprobation of the deportment of said brethren in the premises, and command them to return to the established order of this church.

"The resolution was negatived—Ayes, 3; Nays, 13; Silent, 2.

"Monday morning.—It was moved by Messrs Dickey† and Porter‡:—

"Whereas a diversity of judgment and practice has been found to exist among the ministers and members of this church, relative to the application of the doctrine of the Confession of Faith concerning the Communion of Saints; and whereas the course of correct procedure in this matter must depend in a great measure upon circumstances which cannot be provided for by any general rule, therefore,

---

* Both from the Presbytery of Monongahela.

† From the Presbytery of Philadelphia.

‡ From the Presbytery of the Carolinas.

"Resolved—That the judicatories, ministers, and members of this church be, and they hereby are, entreated and required to exercise mutual forbearance in the premises; and in the use of their discretion to observe mutual tenderness and brotherly love, studying to avoid whatever may be contrary thereto; and giving especial heed to the preservation of sound and efficient discipline.

"Carried—Ayes, 16; Nays, 3."

In the course of these proceedings Dr. Mason made a speech, which, according to universal tradition, must have been one of the greatest ever heard in an ecclesiastical assembly. A very competent witness, who was present, is still in the habit of calling it the "*mighty speech.*" He spoke about three hours, and, by his overwhelming arguments, persuasions, and entreaties—by his irresistible appeals to Scripture and to history—to the example of our Saviour and his early disciples—to the practice of the best men in every age—to that of the fathers of the Reformation, especially in Scotland—to the peculiar circumstances of the church in Republican America—and to the good or evil effects which must result from a generous or a narrow policy respectively, he carried the Assembly along with him, and produced conviction in every mind not previously incased by bigotry or blinded by prejudice. Only three members of the Synod were found to give their votes against him.

The moderate course taken by the Synod, did not satisfy several of the ministers in the West and South. They felt as much shocked as if the innovation had been a most daring sacrilege. Some, doubtless, were honest in the feelings which they experienced; but others, it is feared, were actuated by less excusable motives. There was, in some quarters, a rancour which only waited for an occasion to give it vent. By letters from friends in Kentucky, Dr. Mason was informed that in the extraordinary measures which followed, two or three of the ministers in that region were peculiarly active.

Even a special meeting of the Particular Synod of Scioto was called to meet at Chilicothe, Ohio, on the 16th October, it would seem, for disorganizing purposes. The object stated in the call was, to determine "whether we will hold communion with our Eastern brethren, or with those who will hold communion with them."

At the meeting, which was actually held on the day appointed, the proceedings of the General Synod were reviewed and condemned; Dr. Mason and his friends were censured; the former was required to make concessions and acknowledgments for his conduct; and a correspondence with other Synods, and with Presbyteries, was instituted for strengthening themselves in these measures.

It must not be supposed, however, that proceedings so marked with insubordination—proceedings so extraordinary and violent, and so indicative of anything but the spirit of the meek and lowly One, received the sanction of all the brethren in the West. They were deeply and extensively deplored. One, calls them "outrages, criminal, disorganizing, and even malicious." Another, thought "the calling of this Synod a most wicked thing," and reprobated in the severest terms, the inflammatory letter which had caused it. Dr. Mason, who was more particularly concerned in the transaction, contented himself with addressing an earnest remonstrance and expostulation in writing, to the Synod of Scioto, pointing out very clearly, the injustice, the impropriety and the mischievous tendency of the course, which they were taking.

Though few of the present day will view the matter in any better light, yet these hostile measures had their effect in spreading disaffection, as well as in both checking the growth of the Seminary, and curtailing the means of its support.

At the next meeting of the General Synod, held at Philadelphia, May, 1812, remonstrances, against holding communion with churches of the General Assembly, were sent in from the Presbyteries of Monongahela, Kentucky, first and second of the Carolinas, and from the congregation of Fernlanah, in Mifflin county, Pennsylvania. These remonstrances were referred to a special committee, consisting of Messrs. Bishop, Lind, Gray, Forest, and Campbell. After a full discussion, which lasted several days, the Synod unanimously adopted the following resolution, reported by the Committee:—

"That the remonstrances should lie on the table; and that a committee should be appointed to prepare and report to the

Synod at its next meeting, a draught of an act declaring and illustrating the doctrine of church fellowship, as taught in the word of God, and the standards of this church."

Rev. J. M. Mason, D.D., Rev. James Gray, D.D., and Rev. E. Dickey, were appointed said committee.

Notwithstanding the untoward influence arising from the above cause, the Superintendents reported the names of eighteen students in the Seminary; also that they "were minutely examined on their knowledge of Theology, and of the Scriptures, in their original languages, and acquitted themselves to the entire satisfaction of the Board."

In the progress of things at this period the subject of church communion, in some of its bearings, was introduced into the New York Missionary Society, and was disposed of by the adoption of the following report:—

The Committee appointed to inquire into the propriety of admitting white persons as members of the church at Tuscarora, report:

Our Lord Jesus Christ has granted to every person who makes a due profession of his name, a right to the privileges of membership in his church.

This right, the courts of His church, whose functions are purely ministerial, have no power to contravene, abridge, or modify. Far less can any such power be lawfully claimed or exercised by such a body as the New York Missionary Society.

Whether the presentation of this right should at any time be foreborne by any individual Christian, is a question of which the decision must depend on contingent circumstances, and can in no wise be subjected to any general rules established by this Society.

The Christian Church in the days of the Apostles, was composed of members as unlikely in many instances to coalesce, as Indians and white men can be. Yet the Scriptures contain no provision for any inconveniences which might result from their admixture, other than such as may apply to collisions arising from different causes.

It would be ruinous to admit members habitually as occasional communicants, who should nevertheless be subject to no church discipline; and inconsistent and unjust to keep them under the coercion of the church, while they are stripped of all their direct weight as constituent members.

The whites in the neighborhood of our Mission have at present no other access to the ministrations of the gospel or means of obtaining them. They are accordingly as properly objects of this Society's care as the Indians themselves. If they be not admitted as complete members of the existing church, either the Society must renounce one of the great ends of its institution, or establish another Mission, for these destitute whites.

Should the preponderance of the whites, or any other occurrence threaten to defeat the benevolent operations of the Mission at Tuscarora, the Society will have the remedy in their own hands; as they can be under no obligation to use their own funds for the destruction of their specific designs.

On the whole, your Committee are of opinion that as the evil apprehended from the unrestricted admission of whites as such is contingent, may never happen, and if it should, will be a subject of prudential management, while their exclusion from the privileges enjoyed by the Indian members would be a hazardous assumption of power by this Society, and an invasion of the order which Christ has established, it will be both right and wise to leave any emergent evil to such a course of remedy as Divine Providence shall point out. They therefore propose the following resolution:—

Resolved, That the admission of members to the communion of the church at Tuscarora be left to the judgment of Mr. Gray and his Session; and that they be, and hereby are directed, to make no distinction between white men and Indians on account of their nationality.

By order of the Committee.

NEW YORK, Aug. 5, 1811. J. M. MASON, *Chairman.*

In a manner somewhat more remote, the same point is touched in a letter to a former student:—

TO THE REV. W. McMURRAY.

New York, 2d October, 1811.

My Dear McMurray: It is not because your happiness, usefulness, or wishes, weigh little with me, that your letter of the 5th August has been hitherto unanswered. Its very important subject has occupied much of my thoughts. But, although sent by mail, it was long on the road; so long that I could not write back to you in season, according to my information, for the meeting of your Presbytery; and you had forgotten to mention the time.

You were put so fully in possession of my general views on the question of your removal, when I conversed with you on that point, that I have very little more to communicate. To cherish "the spirit of the body," in all things lawful, is not merely policy; it is principle; it is duty. Therefore, *cæteris paribus*, the interest of our own actual connexions is to be preferred before all others. I, however, fully agree with you, that we are to be at the disposal of our *Master's* call; and to be found in that station which promises most usefulness to *his church* from our labours. Our friends have been too much in the habit of associating, practically, at least, the approved service of Christ, with serving him in *their* little section of his vineyard; and, less observant of his providence than of their own peculiarities, have considered union, and even intercourse with other Christians, as something like a step towards apostacy. Such notions and feelings, breathing more of the spirit of *sect* than of the gospel, originating in the small vanity of bodies which confine themselves to themselves, and measure themselves by themselves, are not only always pitiable and hurtful, but are loudly rebuked by the moral circumstances of the age. Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ have other employment than bickering about matters which stubborn facts show to be disregarded by him. So that, if it shall appear to be most for the edification of his church that you go to Rhinebeck, far from my heart—however disinclined to be severed from my ecclesiastical children—be the attempt to say nay! In one thing I am sure of your concurrence: I mean the necessity of managing such a transfer with caution and delicacy;

that there may be nothing to justify the imputation of whim, of disaffection to your present brethren, or anything which might be painful to yourself or them.

From the whole tenor of your letter, I conclude that you will shortly become the pastor of the Dutch Church at Rhinebeck. I bow my knees to the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, on your behalf, that he would strengthen you with all might by his spirit in the inner man; and that, whereever you are, you may be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in his blessed work, and always replenished with the power and consolations of his grace. Remember me at His throne, my dear McMurray.

Your friend and brother,

J. M. MASON.

CHAPTER XXX.

1813.

CARE FOR FRIENDS—WESTERN CHURCHES.

Letter to his son Abraham—Letter to Mrs. Bogart—Letter to Mrs. Brown—Hints to Mr. Thomas Warner—Memorandum for Dr. Romeyn—Condition of Western Churches.

Dr. Mason's anxieties and aims respecting his children, may in some measure be seen in a letter to his son Abraham, at school with the Rev. George Stewart, in the village of Bloomingburgh, N. Y.

TO MASTER ABRAHAM MASON.

New York, March 23, 1813.

My Dear Boy: I enjoyed more pleasure than you perhaps imagine, from your letter to me some time ago, and the specimen of your composition which accompanied it. Your letters are creditable to you; and the composition, for the first attempt, exceeded my hope. Nothing gives me higher earthly satisfaction, than promising appearances in my children. Your improvement in understanding and manliness since you went to Bloomingburgh, repays me for my solicitude and expense on your account. Go on, my dear boy, in the good work of cultivating your own faculties, and gladdening the hearts of your parents and friends. Be very careful of your time, so as not to exclude a reasonable share of healthful exercise. Be cleanly in your person, obliging in your manners, gentlemanly towards your fellow scholars, attentive to your studies, respectful and submissive to your teachers, and especially circumspect and docile in your behaviour to Mr. Stewart. Flee from idleness, and all sorts of wickedness. Repress anger, and detest sulkiness. Scrupulously observe the Lord's day as you have been taught. Be faithful in reading your Bible, in your morning and evening secret prayer, and in learning your catechism. Seek the blessing of God upon the performance of your duties. Ask particularly and earnestly, that the Lord Jesus Christ would give you his Holy Spirit. Remember my dear child, that your immortal soul is your most precious possession. *That* lost, all is lost. Be not satisfied till you have good reason to believe that you are the Lord's. Beg of him, beg as for your life, that he would bestow upon you, what the Scriptures call a new heart. Be afraid of nothing so much as of sin. Your mother and I desire to be very thankful for your general good health. All the family send their love. We hope to see you in due season.

Your affectionate father,

J. M. MASON.

It may not be out of place to mention here the fact, that Abraham at an early day made an open and public profession of religion.

The subject of the following two letters was the only unmarried sister of Dr. Mason's mother. She possessed great excellence of character, and with a most amiable Christian meekness of temper united a considerable degree of literary taste. The last year or two of her life she spent in the family of her nephew:—

TO MRS. H. BOGART, HACKENSACK, N. J.

NEW YORK, August 6, 1813.

MY DEAR AUNT: The consummation has at length come. Our loved aunt Maria has bidden us adieu, and has gone to be with Christ. Her departure was sweet and gentle. Without a groan, with scarcely a struggle, at half-past nine this morning, she breathed out her happy spirit into the hands of her Redeemer. Nature feels, and will mourn over the severance of her tenderest ties; but it is only nature that may mourn *here*. It is well. It is peace. It is victory. It is another blessed one added to the "spirits of the just:" another ornament to the celestial world. Come, let us be glad, and rejoice. Heaven sings, and why should not we? How transporting the meeting with those friends who went before! How clear her views and judgment *now* of the Lord's dealing with her! She now *knows* that he has led her by a way that is right, to a city of habitation. To-morrow afternoon we expect to commit her remains to the faithful tomb, where her "flesh shall rest in hope." They are precious remains. They are the property of the Lord Jesus. They are under the consecration of his blood, and in the charge and safe-keeping of his Holy Spirit, who will quicken them in due season, and show them to us, when rescued from the grave, in all their improvement. Not feeble, fading, emaciated, but in the vigour of immortality, in the glory of the skies, in the beauty of the "Word made flesh." My heart rises: Oh, to be with her! I hope it will be so. For us it is left to "follow them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

You may be well satisfied you did not come down. It is best as it has happened. The Lord, *her* God and Father, support my dear aunt, and fill her with abundant consolations!

Ever your affectionate
J. M. MASON.

TO MRS. M. BROWN, FRANKFORT, KENTUCKY.

NEW YORK, August 7, 1813.

AT length, my dear Sister, the battle is over, and the victory won. Our blessed aunt Maria has gone to be with him whom her soul loved. Her faith and patience had their perfect work, and are now reaping their reward in the celestial glory. Her strength, never great, gradually declined. Her frame was visibly taking down, and she sweetly breathed out her spirit at half-past nine yesterday morning. Her day was partially clouded some time before her decease, but the clouds dispersed. At evening time there was light; and her sun sank unobscured in the horizon of earth, to emerge in new splendour above that of heaven. How consoling, my sister—what unutterable cause of thanksgiving, to have every possible assurance, that a dear friend is gone to be with the "Resurrection and the Life!" Oh! it is a world of comfort and of woe, and our best employment in it, is to be actively engaged in that exercise of faith and labour of love, which shall prepare us for leaving it. How little, how puny do all the great things of time appear, when *that eternity* opens to our view! How deep the shade which death throws over the lustre of life! But to our aunt, death brought neither surprise nor consternation. He came with cherub's face, and a message of love. She took his gentle hand and stepped serenely into her Father's house. Her body, a temple of the Holy One, we shall, this afternoon, consign to his custody in the purified tomb. What an assemblage of ransomed bodies rest in that one tomb, to rise together in the Saviour's glory! May we, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, be of the party! I can no more. Nancy and the rest are well. Aunt Maria had the satisfaction of seeing Jane happily married, three days before her own departure.

Ever your affectionate
J. M. MASON.

Mr. Thomas Warner, one of Dr. Mason's former students, accompanied Dr. J. B.Romeyn, in a voyage to Europe for the benefit of his health. Together with several letters of introduction, Dr. M. furnished him with a few practical hints:—

NEW YORK, Oct. 28, 1813.

MY DEAR WARNER: In the affecting moment of separation, neither of us knowing aught of all that shall befall us, you will not disregard a suggestion or two from one who loves you tenderly.

1. Keep the *power* of spiritual religion in your soul; for it may leave you. It is the object of the tempter, and the tendency of your own depravity, to weaken and destroy its influence.

2. If you would enjoy this comfort, keep, by active faith, the Blood of Sprinkling in your conscience. Live upon Jesus as the Lord your *strength;* and never *tamper*, either with the mercies of God, or the wiles of the Devil, or the villanies of your own heart.

3. Make all your observations and acquisitions tributary to the glory of Jesus the Redeemer. This is *good* travelling.

4. Say little about your own country, less about political measures, and least of all about yourself, except for medical purposes, in a strange land.

5. Let no man get out of you *indirectly* what you do not choose to tell him directly.

6. Be very curious after information; but ask questions, not like an inquisitor, or an attorney-general.

7. In conversation and writing, guard against the proneness of your mind to subtlety, and on no consideration, pledge yourself to debates *by letter*. It is a waste of life to worse than no purpose.

8. In the enjoyment of the great hospitality which you will find among Scotch friends, beware of their *suppers*, so as to be duly cautious against cold; and of their toddy at all times. It is extremely insidious. My advise would be never to touch it.

I shall load you with no more admonitions, but commend you to the safe and sanctifying keeping of the Lord Jesus. Grace be with you! Remember your friend,

J. M. MASON.

At the same time, he prepared the following "Private Memorandum" for Dr. Romeyn:

"*H. Thornton, Esq., M. P.*—A gentleman of unaffected Christian simplicity; not ardent in his manner, but staunch in heart, and ready to do solid kindness. He will be the proper medium of access to Lord Sidmouth, Mr. Wilberforce, Lord Teignmouth, and others.

"*W. Wilberforce, Esq., M. P.*—An ardent, active man and Christian; full of thirst for information; abundant in questions, sometimes too rapid to receive distinct answers.

"*Lord Teignmouth.*—Unassuming, frank, dignified; the gentleman and the Christian.

"*Joseph Hardcastle, Esq.*—Modesty and humility personified; good sense of no common order, to *be drawn out in private.* An admirable family altogether. Mr. H. will put Dr. R. in the way for delivering letters to merchants, clergymen, &c.

"*Rev. Alexander Waugh.*—Respectable talent; cheerful, open-prudent piety.

"*James Pritt, Esq.*—A Baptist, of strong sense, elevated and generous spirit, and worthy of high esteem.

"*Robert Bowyer, Esq.*—A Baptist; honest as truth; warm-hearted as summer; a little loose in some of his notions about the church. N. B.—He has occasionally tried his gifts as a lay brother."

EDINBURGH.

"*Rev. Sir H. Moncrieff*—The champion of the orthodox in the politics of the Church of Scotland. A man of masculine understanding, of commanding dignity, and of iron nerve. It is impossible to be in his company without feeling that you must respect him.

"*Rev. Dr. Davidson*—Gentle, placid, pure, spiritual; talents moderate; zeal and diligence great; affectionate, tender, beloved by the good; not well-treated by some of the fierce-moderation-men.

"*Rev. J. F. S. Jones*, of Lady Glenorchy's Chapel—Ingenious, curious, zealous, full of information and singular anecdote; cheerful; vivacious; highly respectable.

"*Rev. Dr. Walter Buchanan*, of the Canongate—Unaffectedly good; warm in attachment to Christians; unassuming; communicative where he can trust.

"*Rev. Dr. James Hall*, Burgher—A heart as large and as kind as Gaius; much the gentleman; most public spirited.

"*Rev. Mr. Peddie*, Burgher—Solid, sound, rather cold, somewhat reserved, often pleasant, worth knowing.

"*Rev. Dr. Jemieson*, Antiburgher—With qualities that would greatly augment his respectability and usefulness, if he were liberated from the manacles and prison of Antiburgher rigour. An antiquarian.

"*Mr. E. Mason*—A merchant: my uncle; find him out for yourself. N.B.—It will be best to call on him first, when in Edinburgh. He will take pleasure in facilitating your other calls."

GLASGOW.

"*Dr. Robert Balfour*—The Coryphæus of the Scotch pulpit, commonly called the Preaching Machine. Very cheerful and hospitable; who both loves his friends, and glorifies his God.

"*Rev. Dr. John Dick*, Burgher—Perhaps their first man; cool, clear and decisive.

"*Rev. John Mitchell*, Antiburgher, Anderston—Amiable; respectable, retired, smothered under the Antiburgher bushel. N.B.—His wife, a daughter of the late William Gillespie, is something of a *wit*, but not a tormenting one.

"*Rev. John Love*, Chapel-of-Ease, Anderston—Solemn, fervent in spirit, ingenuous, of great imagination, original, inclined to melancholy; deals much in *angels*."

The above was accompanied by other hints for facilitating his journeys through England.

About this time he preached a series of discourses on family instruction and government, which were considered by his hearers preëminently valuable. More than one publishing house offered a liberal premium for the privilege of printing them for the public at large; but unfortunately they were not written, and he had not time enough at his disposal to reduce them to that form.

For the same reason he had often before been obliged to decline urgent applications from various parts of the country for the publication of sermons and other productions.

From Chilicothe, Ohio, under date of August 15, 1813, the Rev. John McFarland describes the state of things in the West as follows: "The war has had a disastrous effect upon the religious community in this State. Emigration from other parts is stopped. All the attention of people is turned to the scenes of blood and to the safety of worldly interests. And in this Presbytery, a war has commenced, to be lamented equally with that which prevails in the frontier of the State. That spirit of contention and slander, which has been cherished by too many of our people in the West, with respect to other denominations, has begun to operate internally; and will, in all probability, tear this Presbytery into fragments. The only prudent measure which presents itself to me is, for Mr. B., and those who associate with him to withdraw to this State, and get themselves, with those already here, constituted into a Presbytery. If this could be done, and they could afford to make the sacrifices necessary so long as the war continues, there is little doubt but much good might be effected on this side of the Ohio river. Taking all things however as they are, I am at a loss what course to pursue. A few lines from you would be very acceptable, and would probably relieve me from much anxiety."

CHAPTER XXXI.

1814.

A CHALLENGE, COLUMBIA COLLEGE, ETC.

Advice to an officer of the Army—Aid from the State for Columbia College—Letter to A. Van Vechten, Esq.—Letter to Mrs. Janet Suffern—The Communion Question—Proceedings of the Synod—The Seminary—The Rev. J. M. Duncan Letter of Dr. Balfour—Sermon on Mrs. Graham—Letter to Dr. Raffles—Letter to Mrs. M. Brown—Letter to Mr. Veech.

In the beginning of the present year, Dr. Mason's advice was asked by an officer in the army, who seems to have been a professor of religion, under embarrassing circumstances. The nature of the difficulty, as well as the course recommended, will sufficiently appear from his answer:—

DR. M. TO CAPTAIN ——, U. S. ARMY.

New York, January 10th, 1814.

My Dear Sir: I deeply sympathize with you in the trial to which your public duty and Christian virtue have been put by a challenge from one of your brother officers; and am rejoiced and consoled by the triumph, thus far, of all that is good and holy, of all that is rational and true, of all that is magnanimous and brave, in refusing from principle to fight a duel; in which fools and atheists, madmen and cut-throats and cowards, have courage enough to engage, on the slightest provocation; but which it requires that rare virtue, *moral heroism*, to decline on the greatest. At the same time I doubt the propriety of the course, which, in *this stage* of the business, you seem inclined to take. Direct appeals to the public ought to be the last resort. It is hardly military to adopt, without *final* necessity, an unmilitary mode of defence. You have a regular military form of redress, which ought by all means to be tried, before you present yourself at the bar of the public.

I take it for granted that you have given no plausible reason of dissatisfaction to the challenger. Be *very sure* on this head; and be not fastidious. If you have in any way been so unfortunate as to injure him, honour and generosity combine with justice and religion to enforce the utmost extent of reparation consistent with their united claims. If you have done no wrong, then the process is short: Have the challenger and his second immediately arrested and tried by a court-martial under the "Rules and Articles of War." You may prefer solid charges, and touch no others. You will of course be certain of your proofs; and will not fail to keep for inspection the *written challenge*, if such an one was sent.

I trust you will keep yourself perfectly cool, but insist on a court-martial. Provided you can fairly make out your case, and should the court not do you justice, appeal to a general court martial. Should you fail there, appeal to God and your country, and resign a sword which you cannot wear without crime. I pray you to put it fully to the test whether the "Articles of War" are an unmeaning letter or not. Reap the honour of arraying public principle against private depravity. But as you love your country—as you would not be a perjured soldier—as you fear God—as you look for reward to *that* eternity—as you would not break the hearts of your best friends—as you would not scandalize the wise and good, and be cast away from the church of Jesus Christ in the present life—persist, inflexibly persist, in refusing the challenge. My prayers are for you in this time of need.

Affectionately yours,

J. M. MASON.

In the early part of March, in this year, he prepared a memorial and petition to the Legislature of the State, in behalf of the Trustees of Columbia College, asking for assistance in sustaining and enlarging their institution. This paper was presented to the Legislature, but for weeks lingered in that body and was in danger of being defeated. Under these circumstances, Dr. Mason found it necessary to visit Albany, and personally see the members in order to elicit their attention and secure his object. This brought him into connection with the President of another institution, who had a similar application before the Legislature at the same time. It is due to this distinguished individual, that so far from standing in the way of Dr. Mason, he aided him. These two great men presented the noble spectacle of rising above every feeling of rivalship in similar stations, and of coöperating with the utmost magnanimity in obtaining legislative assistance for building up the two institutions. The result was that they both succeeded. Union College obtained a grant of $200,000 to be raised by lottery; Columbia College obtained the Elgin Botanical Garden, near New York. It deserves a further remark, that after much delay and many embarrassments, the lotteries were brought to a successful termination, and the College realized the whole amount granted. Moreover, by the good investments which Dr. Nott had made of the stipulated consideration received for his sagacity and and courage in sustaining the contractors, and in conducting their affairs to a prosperous issue, at the expense of very great hazards and exertions to himself, he was enabled in 1854, to present to the Trustees a donation of more than $600,000. At the same time, the Botanical Garden had so increased in value as to enrich Columbia College with a property worth about the same amount. Thus were laid the foundations of two magnificent seats of learning for the successive generations of this growing Republic; and posterity may one day see and acknowledge to what extent the state of New York is indebted to these two individuals for its progress in education, and thus in knowledge and skill, civilization and power.

Soon after his visit to Albany, an accident befell a son of the friend whose hospitality Dr. M. had enjoyed while in that city. This gave occasion for a note evincing the deep interest which he felt in the occurrence.

TO ABRAHAM VAN VECHTEN, Esq.

New York, April 30, 1814.

My Dear Friend: I have not for a long time received a letter which gave me so great relief and such heart-felt pleasure, as your most welcome note of the 27th instant. I was waiting with trembling anxiety for news of your son whose misfortune I had heard of shortly after it happened. This new affliction has taken such fast hold of my mind, that the night before your note arrived, I "suffered many things in a dream," because of you and yours. My agony awakened Mrs. Mason, and it was a considerable time before she could get me composed enough to feel that the "visions of my head" were not realities. I thank our good and gracious God that your son is on the recovery. A smart stroke of the rod does us no hurt, when it is administered by the hand of blessing. How infinitely important, my friend, to have a portion which neither accident nor death can reach! The "fountain of life" be yours; the living God, the strength of your heart and your portion forever! My prayer is, that your son may be preserved as a crown of glory to his father, a consolation to his mother, an ornament to the doctrine of God our Saviour, and therefore a blessing to the surrounding world.

You will not fail to keep your promise of making my house the home of yourself and any of your family when you visit New York.

As ever, yours sincerely,
J. M. MASON.

As an evidence of the tender solicitude with which he watched over the younger members of his flock, take a note to one of them as she was about to sail for Europe:—

TO MRS. JANET SUFFERN.

WARREN STREET, August 31, 1814.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND: As you may have opportunities of commemorating your Saviour's love while you are absent from New York, I enclose you a certificate of your church membership.

I cannot think of parting with you without reminding you, solemnly and affectionately, that you are the Lord's. Keep in view your sacred relation. Derive both admonition and consolation from this blessed truth, that *wherever you are, God is.* Keep close to your Redeemer, and He will never leave you. Be as cheerful as you please under the regulation of this principle, that whatever you do in word or deed, you are to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus: that is, your general rule of action must be, that nothing is fit for you to do or say, which you cannot pray your Lord to bless; and you are to commit your way unto Him. I shall only add: let your Bible be your daily companion, and the mercy-seat of your Heavenly Father, your daily resort.

I commend you and your husband to God and the word of His grace. He who bindeth the winds, and who sitteth upon the floods, have you both in His holy keeping; bless you with blessings from heaven above, and from the earth below; and return you in health and happiness to the bosom of your family and friends! So prays your affectionate pastor,

J. M. MASON.

The struggle in his ecclesiastical connexion on the subject of intercommunion, was both severe and protracted. In conclusion of a letter to his nephew, Rev. John M. Duncan, dated April, 1814, he alludes to it as follows:—"I hope your Presbytery will take care to be fully and *well* represented at the next General Synod. The meeting will be critical. Mischief, I know, is brewing. We shall have to make one more great effort for preserving the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. If successful, it will probably be the last; and our warfare in this view will 'be ended.' If unsuccessful the consequences may be very calamitous—as going back under the 'yoke which neither we, nor our fathers could bear,' is out of the question. The signs of the times discourage me; but the commandment of God, and not the calculations of man, must regulate our course. To be valiant and victorious in the cause of truth, it is neccessary to live upon the Lord our *strength*, and to fetch help from above by the prayer of faith. I rejoice to hear of the acceptance with which the Master has pleased to honour you. Be modest; be humble, and you will be safe. The grace of the crucified, and the power of the risen Saviour be with you!"

In May, of this year the Synod met at Greencastle, Pa. As was expected the subject of communion was discussed at greater length than ever before, occupying several days. The result was, that the following resolutions were prepared and laid over for future action:—

"Resolved, that communion, as opportunities shall occur, in the course of Providence, with churches sound in the faith, and with individual ministers and Christians, of known orthodoxy and godly conversation, whatever subordinate differences may subsist between them, is not contrary, but most conformable to the word of God, and to the constitution and standards of this church, and is not to be forbidden to the members thereof.

"Resolved, that the application of this principle must be left to the discretion of those judicatories within whose bounds it shall be called for; provided that no practice be adopted or indulged which shall throw open the door to promiscuous communion with all who rank under the general denomination of Christians, or to the admission of erroneous doctrine into our pulpits."

Notwithstanding the many embarrassing and counteracting influences with which he was surrounded, Dr. Mason must have felt not a little comforted by the continued smiles of Providence upon his labours. At this meeting of the Synod twenty-two students were reported as attending the Seminary; and soon after he received a cheering word from an old friend.

TO DR. MASON.

New York, June 21st, 1814.

My Dear Sir: Your letter of yesterday I have received, acknowledging the receipt of five hundred dollars to the Public Fund of the Theological Seminary under your care.

I am willing that it should appear on the minutes of the General Synod. Having contributed to another Seminary a similar amount, I should wish to express to the world, so far as individual opinion is worth, that your Seminary is second to none in its usefulness to the church of our blessed Redeemer.

That the Holy Spirit may pour down his influence on your soul and the souls of your students, and may accompany with Divine energy, the word of His grace preached by you and by them, is the sincere prayer of yours, with affectionate respect,

DIVIE BETHUNE.

Long before this time, Dr. Mason had learned to appreciate both the talents and the gifts of Mr. Duncan. It must have been with grateful emotions that he expressed his present views in a letter to Mr. James Campbell, an Elder of the Baltimore church, dated Oct. 24, 1814, accompanied with useful hints: "My nephew has met with general and deserved acceptance in our pulpits. I am sure that I am not governed by partiality to my own blood when I say that he rises in my esteem. I pray and hope that his Redeemer will keep him and bless him to you long. Do not try whether your kind-hearted Baltimorians cannot kill him by preaching, out of pure love; and back your importunities by that common and unanswerable argument—"You do not know how much good you may do!" Respect youth and a weak breast. Cherish, but do not worship him. When he goes wrong, tell *him*, not your *acquaintances*, of it; tell him like men, like brothers, like Christians, and you will all be the better for it, and more closely united in love."

The feelings with which Dr. Romeyn was received by the clergy of Scotland, is sufficiently indicated by a letter from one of the most distinguished of them:—

TO DR. MASON.

GLASGOW, Aug. 13, 1814.

MY DEAR SIR: Most cordially do I thank you for thinking on me with any *kind* remembrance, and especially for introducing me to such a friend as Dr. Romeyn. I can assure you that (wicked statutes excepted) your epistle of commendation, and my previous information of the Doctor's character, opened at once my hand and heart and house to receive him as a Christian friend and brother in the ministry, a good man and true. I received him, I hope, for the truth's sake. My only grief was that I could not pay him and Mrs. Romeyn the attentions I wished, owing to the absence of my wife and daughters, and that a *wicked* statute *barred* my pulpit against him. But I think I would not otherwise be hindered in the *full* exercise of brotherly love by a *small thread* of ecclesiastical party. Shall we live to see every partition wall broken down, and to be all one in Christ Jesus? I am for holding communion with all who hold the head. But when I speak for such peace, immediately I hear the cry of war. Let me now add, upon my own personal, though transient knowledge, that I esteem Dr. Romeyn on his own account worthy of being everywhere received as a Christian and a minister of superior endowments, and equal grace and zeal in the service of our common Lord. I rejoice also to hear of *your* continued health and usefulness. May you be long a burning and shining light by personal and exemplary religion, by a converting and edifying ministration of the Word of Life, and by a successful tuition of young men to carry on the work of the Lord! Many would be glad to see and hear you again in this country; but if it be too much to expect this privilege, *your* letter by any friend like Dr. Romeyn, will procure him any attention in our power to pay.

I am, my dear Sir,
Yours, truly and affectionately,
ROBERT BALFOUR.

After Dr. M. resigned his charge of the church in Cedar street, Mr. Bethune, with his family, including his mother-in-law, Mrs. Graham, were transferred to the Presbyterian church in the same street. It so happened that during the absence of their pastor, Dr. Romeyn, Mrs. G. died; and Dr. Mason was invited by the Session to preach her funeral sermon, which by request from the same board was published.

A copy of this sermon accompanied a written acknowledgment of an interesting favour received from an esteemed minister in Liverpool:—

TO THE REV. THOMAS RAFFLES.

New York, August 31, 1814.

Rev. and Dear Sir: I duly received your kind letter accompanied by your Life of Spencer; and also the copy of the second edition, which you sent by Miss Howland. I beg you to accept my best thanks, while from my heart I deplore the occasion of our correspondence. I know of nothing but the Christian's *faith* which can preserve the mind steady, or even prevent it from falling into wildering disorder, under such calamities as the death of that peerless youth. How little do we know of the ways of God: or the best method of managing the affairs of his church? We wish to govern the world; and glorious governors we should make! Nothing more is wanting to show that we should do almost everything wrong if we were permitted to have our own choice, than this fact, that we should do almost everything different from the wisdom of God. For example, we should have kept Spencer on earth, and God saw it best to take him to heaven. Our consolation, dear Sir, is, that the Lord Jesus, the head of his church, lives; and lives for her; that his spirit shall never cease to animate his own body. She is rich, very rich, when in consideration of what she possesses in Christ, she can *afford* to lose such youths as Spencer. Sealed be our lips in humble submission. We shall understand this matter better hereafter.

I have nothing at present to offer your notice except a Sermon, just from the press, on the death of an *old* disciple. It is the only funeral sermon I ever preached.

The gentleman who, I hope, will deliver this, is Mr. Suffern of very respectable character. He married a few days ago, Miss Janet Wilson, of this city. She is an amiable young lady, and has been one of my flock since her birth. Should an opportunity of communion in the Supper of our Lord occur while she is in Liverpool, I commend her to your fellowship. She has for some time been one of our communicants.

With much respect, I am, dear Sir,
Your brother in the Gospel,
J. M. MASON.

His sister, in Kentucky, losing her only daughter, a child of very uncommon promise, drew from him a most feeling expression of sympathy:—

TO MRS. MARGARETTA BROWN.

NEW YORK, October 29, 1814.

MY BELOVED SISTER: The heart-rending news of your recent bereavement reached us yesterday afternoon. Bereavement indeed! I feel it sorely; but what is my anguish to yours? Few mothers have so precious and promising a daughter to lose. I had fondly cherished her in my tenderest affections as destined to be hereafter a crown of beauty and of blessing to our whole family. The Lord—yes, the Lord *our* God—yes, God our Heavenly *Father*—has judged otherwise; and judged better. So saith his word: "He doeth all things well"—he hath done *this* thing, this grievous thing—this unlooked for, overwhelming thing—he hath done even *this* thing "*well*." So says our *faith*, believing in his word. But, ah!

how hard to get the amen of our hearts. Yet, I trust, my sister and brother, like their sweet sainted babe, will be enabled to humble themselves under the hand of God. His voice in this dispensation is, "Be still and know that I am God." Submission is your first duty; importunate supplication for sanctified chastisement, your next. You have often prayed, "Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." Fret not that he has put you to the test of your own petition. But "glorify the Lord in the fires; . . . . and you shall find him for a *sanctuary*." Here, my sister, is your refuge. Vain and impertinent, to a heart bleeding under such a stroke as has been inflicted on yours, are the consolations of earth. All that the very dearest friends can impart, must be brought from the storehouse of heavenly compassions. There is only one friend who can heal the broken heart; and that friend, more gracious than the children of men, or the pure spirits of light, is our Brother and our Advocate before the mercy seat—who has given for us, and to us, unutterably more than he will ever take, or permit to be taken from us. We know not how rich, how divine his promises are, till we be placed in circumstances to which they are peculiarly fitted. Sit at his feet, my sister, and put in your claim upon his loving kindness, in this your hour of tribulation. Make your appeal to his sympathy—that sympathy which called forth his tears—marvellous fact!—the tears of the Lord Jesus!—to mingle with the tears of a sister at her brother's grave. Tell him he hath commanded you to "call upon him in the day of trouble," and hath promised to answer you. Tell him that he has assured the seekers of his face, that if he chastens them, it is "for their profit, that they may be partakers of his holiness;" that he has written in his blessed book, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," and that now you need his help; that he has promised "all things to work together for good to them that love him;" and that your grieved soul looks to him for the peaceable fruits of righteousness even from that baleful tree which now throws over you its chilling and darksome shade. *Trust* him, dearest sister. Trust him while you ask; and your eyes shall see his salvation; and your lips shall sing of his power; they shall sing, "It is good for me that I was afflicted."

It is the *present* duty of us all to consider the doings of the Lord. He hath smitten our family with a double stroke. Little did I think on the 30th September, when I closed the eyes of our cousin, John Varick, that the eyes of your little cherub were to be closed the next morning. I cast my eyes around upon my own, and my heart trembles. It is almost too much to hope that my seven shall all be spared till I be called hence—I would wish to say—home. My prayer, "which goeth not out of feigned lips," is, "Holy Father, give preparation to the one that shall go next!" I desire to sit loose to comforts that I must part with; at least for this world. I would have no idols, though I feel the idolatrous principle at work within me. The good Lord subdue it in us all! Meanwhile you have ground of joy—joy that you have a Father into whose bosom you can pour out your sorrows—joy that you have grounds of persuasion that Euphemia has exchanged your society for that of the little ones of whom is the kingdom, and of him who is the Lord of the kingdom. It was good for her to be with you; it is infinitely better for her to be with Christ. May he strengthen and support you and your afflicted husband with heavenly support! I need not tell you how deeply this family shares with you, and none more deeply than your affectionate brother,

J. M. MASON.

The death of a respected student in the Seminary called forth the following comforting lines to his father in Kentucky:—

TO MR. JOHN VEECH.

NEW YORK, October 31, 1814.

DEAR SIR: On the 15th instant, I wrote you a letter apprizing you of your son's illness. Our hopes were much elated the next morning, (Lord's day); but the flattering appearances vanished towards evening. He grew much worse on Monday. On Tuesday morning, a little after six o'clock, he calmly yielded up his spirit into the hands of his Heavenly Father. His remains were deposited in the ministers' vault of the Murray Street Church; and were followed by a considerable number of very respectable citizens.

While many circumstances concur to render this dispensation of Divine Providence very trying to his absent relatives, there are others calculated to soothe and comfort them. No human efforts were spared. No person could receive more patient, kind, and tender attention. The affectionate vigilance of his fellow students was unwearied by day and by night, to the very last. You have lost much, my dear Sir, in such a son. I have lost much in such a pupil. The Seminary has lost an ornament; the youth who resort to it, a friend; the church, one of her promising children. But it is the Lord! We are not forbidden to weep; but we may not repine. Entire, absolute submission to the Master's will, was the prevailing desire of your James. That will was to take him home. It is all right. What we have lost, the skies have gained. You have reason to rejoice that he left ample evidence of preparation for entering upon the "inheritance of the saints in light." He was incoherent and flighty on other subjects; but always collected, always *himself*, on eternal things. The name of the Lord Jesus, or mention of a promise from the Bible, brought him instantly back from his wanderings. "My beloved Redeemer," were among his last expressions heard by me. Be not then cast down; but rather give thanks.

Yours, truly,

J. M. MASON.

CHAPTER XXXII.

1814—1815.

THE GENERAL SYNOD. LETTERS.

The Seminary—A New Question in the Synod—Letter to Ebenezer Clark, Esq.—Letter to Rev. J. McJimsey—Letter from Dr. Raffles, Liverpool.

At the meeting of the Synod in May, 1814, the subject of intercommunion again came up, but still without any decisive result. In the mean time Dr. Mason continued his labours, with undiminished success. The Board of Superintendents reported the names of twenty-nine students in the Seminary; twelve of whom were from other denominations than the Associate Reformed Church.

At this meeting a new question was introduced, involving a very important principle of church polity, which has since that time repeatedly presented itself in different communities and various forms, and which is likely at some future day to exert a far more extensive influence. It also gave occasion for the interchange of several letters between Dr. Mason and his friends. As the minutes declare, it was introduced by Dr. Gray and seconded by Mr. James Mairs, in the words following:—

"Resolved—That a Committee be appointed to inquire into the Scriptural warrant and practical effects of Trustee Boards, acting under civil incorporations, in the Church of God."

By this arrangement, the spiritual interests of the church are liable to be seriously affected, if not controlled, either directly or indirectly, by men who are but ill qualified either to understand their nature or to appreciate their value. If the civil organization of a country, with its manners and customs, were thoroughly permeated and imbued with evangelical principles and spirit, the danger would unquestionably be less; but in the actual and prospective state of things, there are at least strong grounds of apprehension. So far as the testimony of history goes, every form of connexion between church and state has proved injurious to the best interests of the former. If secular men are invested with power in the church, they are likely to introduce secular elements. If, on the other hand, the church and its officers are invested with civil power of any sort or in any degree, they are in great danger of soon contracting a secular savour. Many striking instances could easily be adduced. Dr. Mason, in his later days, became strongly inclined to this opinion—as we may see in a letter to his friend,

EBENEZER CLARKE, Esq., ARGYLE.

New York, August 7, 1815.

My Dear Sir: Your kind letter of the 31st ult., requesting information relative to certain transactions at our last meeting of Synod, and other matters connected therewith, came to hand on Saturday, the 5th instant.

If I had not been for many years accustomed to the strangest misconceptions and misrepresentations of the plainest things, I should have been beyond measure astonished at the reports and statements mentioned in your letter. My reverend brother James Mairs is incapable of a wilful departure from the truth; but in the present instance, he has not been quite accurate. No proposition was introduced into the Synod for *abolishing* religious incorporations; nor did *I introduce* any proposition whatever about them. I have long entertained doubts of their expediency; indeed ever since we failed in our attempt to get an act of incorporation for our General Synod. I had been in the habit of *supposing* them to be valuable accommodations. That disappointment however led me to examine more closely into their use. I soon began to waver. I enquired and pondered, without saying much; and the result has been a conviction, that, instead of a benefit, they are a great evil to the church of God; that they are, as now regulated, inconsistent with her nature; and contain the germ, *to be hereafter evolved*, of the most corrupt and profligate patronage—a patronage which may ultimately prostrate the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ at the feet of political demagogues. Such being the state of my views, I mentioned them to Dr. Gray, and found that he had come, by a different route, to the same conclusion. There had been no concert between us, till both our opinions were formed. Nor did the one know of the process which was going on in the other's mind, until it was nearly finished. In consequence of these things, Dr. Gray introduced into the Synod a motion, not to abolish, but to appoint a committee to inquire into the nature and tendency of civil incorporations in the Church of God. This motion I strenuously supported. In the course of discussion, we declared ourselves without reserve. The subject was new; the brethren were startled; but everything was perfectly calm and friendly. The motion passed with only one "No." And Dr. Gray, Silas E. Weir, and myself, were appointed a Committee to report on the subject.

In mentioning some facts to show the facility with which the power of the Trustee Board may be applied to control and coerce the spiritual authority and privileges of the church, I stated an occurrence which had taken place in my own congregation. It was this: "When the news of Bonaparte's deposition arrived, it was proposed to celebrate the deliverance of Europe by a féte, accompanied with an oration, and with public thanksgiving to God for his goodness. The committee of arrangements asked for the use of my place of worship, and requested me to perform the religious part of the service. I agreed with pleasure; for I was glad, and could give thanks with my whole heart. I told them I had no doubt of their getting the church; but should consult the Trustees, and send an answer at twelve o'clock. I saw the chairman, and one or two other members; no objection was offered; and I sent the promised notice. In the mean time, however, the Board met, and a few minutes after twelve, I received information, that they had *refused the use of the church.* This refusal induced me to think further on the subject of Trustee Boards; and I reasoned thus: "Here was a moral and religious service to be performed. I was myself to officiate. The Trustees lock up the doors of the church; *i. e.* the *civil incorporation have, on their own authority shut me out of my own place of public worship.* If they can do this, in one instance, they can in another. If one set of Trustees can do it, every other set can. So that the *principle* of their refusal is, that the civil incorporation can turn *minister and people out of the church whenever they please;* and there is no remedy but the plague of a law-suit, or the ruinously slow process of a new election." That my Trustees had any such intention —that they meant any personal disrespect to me—that they were distinctly aware of the *principle* wrapped up in their act, —I no more believe, than I believe they meant to blow us all up with gunpowder. But this does not alter the nature of the *principle itself.* In this form, and in this only, did I urge it on the floor of Synod. As to the story about the tokens—about my variance with the Trustees—and their shutting the church against me on that account—it is all a fabrication. I never had a moment's interruption of the harmony between myself and the Trustees, or the session, or the congregation. I have said, that I shall bring the power of the Trustees in this matter to the test; that, if they have it not, they may not acquire it by unintentional usurpation; and if they have, that speedy measures may be taken to destroy it, before its grizzle shall harden into bone, and the paws of the cub be armed with fangs. I have said, that I will never again ask the *Trustees* whether any, and if any, what moral and religious exercises shall be held in the house of worship; and shall submit such questions to the Spiritual authority only.

I perceive that your folks of "one line," are something like an old woman in Mr. Craig's congregation in Kentucky, who, when *two* lines happened to be given out at once, rose up and cried that *she* "would have no such doings there: that she would have none but David's psalms, David's *tunes*, and David's *way of lining! ! !*" The attempt by the congregation in mass to wrest the authority in matters of worship out of the hands of the Session, is a more serious affair; and must be resisted. Our popular notions infest everything with the poison of their licentiousness. If matters go on, as they have been going on for some years back, hardly one of God's institutions will be left standing in the country. Domestic, civil, and religious government will fall victims to their frenzy. All will be mob; all will be chaos. The good Lord rebuke the devourer! Grace be with you. Yours, affectionately,

J. M. MASON.

TO THE REV. J. McJIMSEY.

New York, November 17, 1815.

My Dear Brother: I rejoice with you in the comfortable changes which God's merciful providence has effected in your condition. When I last saw you, your prospects were very dark. But the pillar of cloud to sense, is a pillar of fire to faith. We agreed in the blessedness of *waiting.* "He that believeth shall not make haste." You found, my dear friend, the comfort of having liberty to cast your "burden upon the Lord." He is "faithful that hath promised." He has brought you out of your affliction. O my brother, there is no life like the life of faith! Nothing so sweet as the enjoyments which faith receives at the hand of the "Hearer of prayer." What a miracle! A poor sinner in darkness and the deeps, settled, serene, and happy, by the power of that "precious faith" which is "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." Let us keep it in constant action. It is the mighty lever (God's eternal faithfulness in Christ Jesus, being the prop) which moves the world. And every believer in the use of it, is a spiritual Archimedes. Dear friend, having such encouragement, let us aim at walking close with God, and God will assuredly walk with us. And then, whom or what shall we fear? Affectionately yours,

J. M. MASON.

An estimate of Mrs. Graham, beautifully expressed by Dr. Raffles, is worth preserving:—

TO THE REV. DR. MASON.

Liverpool, February 9, 1815.

Rev. and Dear Sir: I duly received your kind letter and its valuable accompaniment by the hands of Mr. Suffern, who made a very short stay here, and proceeded to the north. For your admirable Sermon, I beg you to accept my warmest thanks. Mrs. Graham must have been an extraordinary character. Some of our friends here knew her, and though your description is so glowing, they assure me that it is by no means overcharged. What a woman must the original of such a picture have been! Her removal must have produced a powerful sensation in the city where she lived; and the void occasioned by it will probably long remain unoccupied. These are high examples for our imitation. They beam upon us in such memorials of their worth, as in this case you have presented to the world, like rays from the source of moral excellence and beauty, to animate and to direct us in our journey to the skies. Our divine Redeemer demands our grateful acknowledgments in the first instance for his own illustrious pattern; and then for the "cloud of witnesses" by which he has surrounded us. May we be *followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises!*

Your very obliged and faithful friend and servant,
THOMAS RAFFLES.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

1816.

PREPARATION FOR A VOYAGE.

Resignation of his Provostship—Proceedings of the Synod—Overture to the Reformed Dutch Church—Convention of Commissioners from the two Churches—Treatise on Communion—Hall's Commendation—American Bible Society—Letter from Mr. Jay—Commission to Kindred Institutions Abroad—Letters on Leaving—Parting Scene.

For years the powers of Dr. Mason had been overtaxed with duties, when at length he felt himself sinking under their weight. In May, 1816, he was compelled, notwithstanding the ardour and resoluteness of his mind, to seek release from some of his engagements, and a temporary suspension of them all.

His first intimation was made to the Trustees of Columbia College in a communication tendering his resignation as Provost of that institution. This office he had nearly five years before been induced to accept by a strong desire to carry out his views of classical education, and by other reasons of great force. He now felt compelled to own, that the undertaking, in addition to his other duties, was too much. "My labours," he says in his letter to the Trustees, "need reduction. In choosing between the part to be retained and the part to be relinquished, I have endeavoured to view them in their several bearings, and to weigh the arguments on either side. The result is a persuasion, that it is my duty to retire from the College."

This conclusion he made known to the people of his church and congregation, and at the same time obtained their assent to the recommendation of his medical advisers for an absence of several months.

The proceedings of the General Synod in relation to the same matter is thus recorded in their minutes:—

"Dr. Mason stated, that his health has become so seriously impaired, in consequence of the burden of his public labours, that he found it necessary to lighten the pressure; and has accordingly determined to resign the office of Provost in Columbia College; that his own judgment, as well as the opinions of medical men, whom he has consulted, decides it to be his duty to take a voyage to Europe as furnishing the most probable means of effecting a restoration of his health; but that as the accomplishment of such a voyage will necessarily prevent his services in the Theological Seminary at the next session, he wishes to have the approbation of this Synod to the contemplated measure." He then withdrew.

Whereupon, on motion of Dr. Gray,

"Resolved, that this Synod, deeply sensible of the important and laborious services which their brother, Dr. Mason, has been enabled to render to the church of God, and to the literature of the country, sincerely sympathize with him in the present reduced and broken state of his health; that they not only acquiesce in the measure proposed for his recovery, but are desirious that it should be carried into effect without delay; and they pray that the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls may have their beloved brother in His holy keeping; and, if such be the Divine will, restore him in due season to the enjoyment of health, and to his services in the church of God.

"The following was moved by Mr. Stewart and unanimously adopted:

"It being well known that The Rev. Dr. John M. Mason has been employed now for eleven years as Professor in our Theological Seminary, without receiving any pecuniary compensation for his services; and whereas, Dr. Mason's health has become seriously impaired by the pressure of his many duties, among which those of the professorship have contributed their full share; and whereas, Dr. Mason proposes a transatlantic voyage as a means of recovering his health, from which it is a matter of uncertainty whether a Holy Providence shall permit him to return and resume the duties of his professorship; therefore

"Resolved, That the Synod embrace the present opportunity to testify, as it hereby does, the high sense which it entertains of the disinterested devotedness of the Rev. Dr. Mason to the interests of this church, in gratuitously discharging the important duties of his professorship; to tender him their acknowledgments for the same, and to pray him to accept as a token of their respect and esteem, and as a pledge of their disposition to remunerate his services much more liberally if they had the means, five hundred dollars, to be paid out of any moneys appropriated to the current expenses of the Theological Seminary."

At the same meeting, a measure was proposed by Dr. Mason, which fully illustrated his catholic principles and feelings.

For many years, the desirableness of a closer union between different branches of the Presbyterian Church in this country, had been extensively felt. Untrammelled by any legal establishment, enjoying entire religious freedom, and mingling together in the most unrestrained social relations and intercourse, it was difficult for reflecting men to find sufficient reason for remaining in separate ecclesiastical communions. Difference of nationality was seen to be no bar to political union; why then should it keep churches apart—especially when they were agreed in doctrine, government, and modes of worship? During the life of Dr. Mason's father, as we have seen, various attempts were made to wipe this reproach from the Christian name. The same tendency of things was often made visible afterwards. As early as 1802, the Rev. Ebenezer Dickey wrote from Philadelphia in these words: "There is one subject on which I would be glad to have your sentiments, viz., a union between our Synod and the General Assembly. I find a disposition towards it is ardently growing among a number of our people in this quarter. It prevails much in this congregation. (*i. e.* the Associate Reformed in Philadelphia). There is a probability that some proposition of this nature may be brought before the General Synod at their first meeting. It is the opinion of Mr. Annan, which he has openly expressed, and frequently to me in private conversation, that such a thing ought to be brought about. My own mind is not fully decided. I am not so much in favour of it as to fall in with active measures to promote it; and even in private conversation to countenance it. Nor do I feel at liberty to make any firm stand in opposition. Any thing hasty would certainly be very improper. But would it be wrong to adopt such measures (with all caution and prudence) as may tend in time to mature a coalescence?"

Such tendencies were afterwards much strengthened no doubt by the discussion which had arisen in the Associate Reformed Church on the subject of Sacramental Communion, between different denominations. Under such influences the way seemed prepared for effecting a nearer union between two ecclesiastical bodies which had long evinced an affinity with each other both in spirit and in views of truth. Under such auspicious circumstances, Dr. Mason, seconded by Dr. A. Proudfit, moved the following:—

"Resolved, That be, and they are, hereby appointed, as Commissioners on the part of this Synod, to meet with Commissioners to be appointed on the part of the General Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church (provided it shall be agreeable to that reverend body), for the purpose of considering whether any, and if any, what measures may be adopted for extending the good understanding happily subsisting between the two churches; and for combining their efforts in some efficient coöperation for promoting the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom; and that the said Commissioners report their proceedings in the premises to this Synod at its next meeting."

The day following, this resolution was unanimously adopted, and the blank filled with the names of Mr. Dickey, Dr. Proudfit, Dr. Mason, *Ministers;* Mr. Joseph Nourse, and Mr. Ebenezer Clark, *Ruling Elders.*

"Dr. Mason was appointed to prepare the draft of a friendly and respectful communication to be addressed by this Synod to the General Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church, and to be presented by the above Commissioners.

"The member having retired, returned and presented the following, which was adopted:—

" *To the Rev. Præses and members of the General Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church—the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Church wish grace, mercy and peace in our Lord Jesus Christ:*

"REVEREND AND BELOVED BRETHREN: In considering the signs of the times, and their aspect towards the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, we have been forcibly impressed, not only with the desirableness, but also with the necessity, of a public coöperation, in counsel and action, by those churches whose relative circumstances render it practicable. And we have thought that with the good hand of our God upon us, it may perhaps be effected between your churches and ours with mutual benefit, and to the glory of His blessed name. We are, and always have been one, in the doctrine which is according to Godliness. Our fathers, in those searching times when the faithful were called to endure, for the elect's sake, bonds and imprisonment, and even to the testimony of their blood, were hearty and generous supporters of each other. Their descendants, to this hour, have obtained mercy to abide in the old paths, the good way wherein they walked, and found rest to their souls. We have ourselves lived in harmony; our intercourse unimbittered with collision and strife; and have been enabled, in a comfortable degree, to exemplify that Divine declaration, 'Behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!' Our churches have enjoyed hitherto the singular favour of exemption from the contamination of false doctrine. These things, added to the loud call of God our Saviour to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, have turned our regards in an especial manner to you, and have excited a hope that such an understanding and concurrence may be produced, as shall redound to the greater advancement of his grace and truth.

"In order to ascertain this point, we have judged it to be our duty, reverend and honoured, to propose an appointment of Commissioners from our two General Synods, to meet and consult on this interesting subject; and we do most respectfully and affectionately crave your agreement thereto. In which case we have chosen our reverend and respected brethren, Mr. Ebenezer Dickey, Dr. Alexander Proudfit, and Dr. John M. Mason, *Ministers;* together with Mr. Joseph Nourse and Mr. Ebenezer Clark, *Ruling Elders*, as Commissioners on our part, to meet with such Commissioners as you may be pleased to appoint, in the City of New York, on Thursday, the thirteenth day of June next; which will further appear by the extracts from our minutes herewith transmitted.

"REVEREND AND HONOURED:

"Our hearts' desire and prayer is, that our Heavenly Father may continue among you, in its purity and power, that holy truth of his which has been your inheritance for ages—that he would bless you and keep you—that he would lift up his countenance upon you, and give you abundance of peace; and that he would so direct our counsels, and influence our hearts, as that we may rejoice together in a holy concert, as fellow-workers with him.

"In the name and by the authority of the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Church."

A response to this communication was made by the General Synod of the Dutch Church, in the appointment of Dr. J. H. Livingston, Dr. Solomon Frœligh, and Dr. James S. Cannon, *Ministers*, and Messrs. Henry Rutgers and James Striker, *Elders*, as Commissioners to act on their part.

A meeting was accordingly held at New York, June 14th, 1816, at which Dr. John H. Livingston acted as President and Dr. J. M. Mason as Secretary; and articles, looking towards a nearer union and coöperation were matured to be submitted to their respective Synods.

These articles were as follows:

"1. The Reformed Dutch Church and the Associate Reformed Church, being bound by the strongest ties of fidelity to the truth as it is in Jesus, summarily exhibited in their respective Confessions of Faith, do hereby most distinctly recognize the obligation to maintain that truth so exhibited; and do pledge themselves to each other, as brethren in the Lord, not to allow any doctrine subversive thereof, or contrary thereto, to be preached in any of their congregations, and to give each other every aid and assistance in their power, in this good and holy work.

"2. The two Churches agree to receive their respective ministers, candidates for the ministry, and private members, to free and full communion, as the Lord shall afford opportunity; allowing their ministers and candidates for the ministry to preach, when properly invited, in their congregations settled or vacant, and admitting them, as well as the private members of the two churches, to sacramental fellowship. But in order to prevent imposition and irregularity, they further agree to inform each other of the manner in which ministers, probationers, and private members are accredited; and to furnish and accept credentials and certificates, which shall correspond with the forms to be respectively communicated.

"3. The two Churches shall not interfere directly or indirectly with their government or order respectively, but will strengthen each others hands by discountenancing and refusing all applications which may be made to them by ministers, probationers, or private members from either, unless regularly accredited by the other, according to the tenor of the preceding article.

"4. Vacancies shall be at liberty to call ministers from either of the churches according to the order established in that church from which he may be called; he conforming himself to the order of the church to which he may be called. And in case of a congregation being formed of people from both, it shall be at liberty to put itself under the care of either at its option.

"5. The General Synods of the two Churches shall form and maintain a regular and constant correspondence with each other, by the mission of two ministers and two elders from each to the other; who shall be affectionately received, and always honoured, respectively as members enjoying a right to deliberate and advise upon every question, but not to vote upon any.

"The Convention have also had under their consideration the subject of the theological education of the ministry of the two churches. But considering the magnitude of the questions which it involves, they would merely present it to the view of the two churches, as of an interest sufficient to command their most serious regard, with a view to such measures as, after the most mature reflection, may be found best calculated to promote the common benefit.

"All which is most respectfully submitted to the General Synods of the Reformed Dutch, and the Associate Reformed Churches, respectively.

"Done at New York, June 14th, 1816.

J. H. LIVINGSTON,
SOLOMON FŒLIGH,
JAS. S. CANNON,
HENRY RUTGERS,
JAMES STRIKER,
J. M. MASON,
ALEX'R PROUDFIT,
EBN'R DICKEY,
JOSEPH NOURSE,
EBENEZER CLARK."

At the last named meeting of the Associate Reformed Synod but little was said on the subject of communion. The battle had at length been won. The efforts to pass a vote of censure which had for several years been made had all failed, and the most considerable parts of the church had quietly acquiesced in that construction of the doctrine which Dr. Mason had given it. His able treatise entitled a *Plea for Sacramental Communion on Catholic Principles*, had issued from the press a short time before. The struggle, having been protracted and arduous, the result cannot be viewed otherwise than as a great work completed mainly through the exertions of one man, and it must have been a source of satisfaction to him, that with his failing health he could retire from the field in hope that respecting this question the churches would be no longer troubled.

The ground maintained in his PLEA is, that the "*members* who hold acknowledged communion with the *Head*, whatever be their subordinate variances, ought also to hold communion with each other in those ordinances which mark their communion with the Head." It will long be regarded as a standard work on this subject. We would hardly be pardoned, if, in this connection, we should omit the noble attestation and tribute of one who, struggling in the same cause, unconsciously manifested his own greatness of soul, as well as the power of his genius, in the act of portraying the merits of another:—

"It is remarkable," says the Rev. Robert Hall, "that without any previous knowledge or concert, a discussion on the subject of communion commenced nearly at the same time on both sides the Atlantic; and the celebrated Dr. Mason, of New York, justly regarded as one of the brightest ornaments of the western hemisphere, was exerting the energies of his powerful mind in establishing the fundamental position of the treatise *On Terms of Communion*,* almost at the very moment that treatise appeared. A coincidence so rare, a movement so simultaneous, yet so unpremeditated, we cannot but look upon as a token for good, as an indication of the approach of that period so ardently desired by every enlightened Christian, when genuine believers will again be of 'one heart and of one mind.' Let us hope that America, the land of freedom, where our ancesters found an asylum from the oppression of intolerance, will exert, under the auspices of such men as Dr. Mason, a powerful reaction on the parent State, and aid her emancipation from the relics of that pestilential evil, still cherished and retained in too many British churches.

"Independent of other considerations, that invaluable person possesses one obvious advantage over the author of the following performance. Disengaged from the spurious refinements and perplexing subtleties which arise from the subject of baptism, by which our opponents attempt to evade the application of his general principle, his movements are in consequence more free and unfettered, and his force operates in a more simple direction than is compatible with the state of the question as it respects the views of the Baptist denomination. He fearlessly spreads his sails to the winds, and triumphs on the element which is congenial to the amplitude and grandeur of his mind. Mine is a coasting voyage, in which the author feels himself necessitated to creep along the shore, and to comply with all its irregularities, in the midst of flats and shoals, and exposed to perpetual annoyance from the innumerable small craft which infest these shallow waters. The effect of the different situations in which we are placed, is to give a luminous simplicity to his mode of conducting the argument, which forms a striking contrast, not only to the tedious logomachies which I have been compelled to encounter,* but to the manner in which I have attempted to confute them."—(Preface of Hall's Answer to Kinghorne, published 1818.)

---

* A work published by himself.

Another important work in which he was privileged to take a leading part before he sailed for Europe, was the formation of the American Bible Society. It so happened that in this instance he was once more thrown into near association and cordial coöperation with that other great man who two years before had acted with him in procuring, from the Legislature, endowments for two literary institutions. With that gentleman he was put upon the Committee appointed to prepare a draught of a Constitution, and of a public Address. It is generally understood that the former task devolved mostly upon one of these gentlemen, and the latter wholly upon the other. Though enfeebled in health and limited in time, between the evening of one day and the morning of the next, Dr. Mason was able to present that noble production which the whole convention at once approved and adopted. It is found among his printed works, and has been extensively admired for its bold and striking thoughts, expressed in masculine power of language. "During the entire proceedings of this convention," says a venerable actor in them, "there was but one short moment when things seemed to tangle, and some feeling began to rise. At this moment Dr. Mason, of New York, hastily rose and said, 'Mr. President, the Lord Jesus never built a church, but the devil built a chapel close to it; and he is here now in this room, with his finger on the inkhorn, not to write your Constitution, but to blot it out.' This sudden address convulsed the assembly with laughter, which in a moment dispelled the gloom and revealed a clear sun. Instantly perceiving this, he said, 'There! there! he is gone already.'"—(Christian Instructor for Jan. 1850.)

---

* "Though Dr. Mason was not led by the course of his argument to treat of the question of *mixed communion*, in the usual import of that phrase, his general principle not only necessarily infers it, but I have had the satisfaction of learning from his own lips his entire approbation of the doctrine advanced in *Terms of Communion*."

Soon after he was gratified with a double testimonial from an Episcopalian of the highest station :—

TO THE REV. DR. MASON.

BEDFORD, May 22, 1816.

DEAR SIR: Accept my thanks for the friendly letter, and the Book,* which you was so obliging as to send me by my son. I have made some progress in reading it. The principle I approve, and am glad it has employed a pen so able to do it justice.

Had all uninspired expositors been content with the simplicity of the Gospel, and not been wise above what is written, the church would probably have suffered less from worldly wisdom and scholastic subtleties.

I rejoice in the institution of a National Bible Society, and for the reasons displayed in the excellent and eloquent Address which accompanied the publication of it.

With the best wishes for the health and prosperity of yourself and family,

I am, dear Sir, your friend,

JOHN JAY.

As Secretary of the recently formed institution, he also received a commission as follows :—

At a meeting of the Board of Managers of the American Bible Society on the 3d July, 1816.

Gen. Matt. Clarkson, Vice-President in the chair.

"Whereas this Board is informed that the Secretary for Foreign correspondence intends shortly to sail for England; Resolved unanimously that the said Secretary is hereby desired, should circumstances permit, to wait in person on the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and to inform said Committee of the establishment of the American Bible Society, and its present auspicious prospects; and that he respectfully assure said Committee that it will ever afford this Society very sincere pleasure to coöperate in those plans of Christian benevolence which have rendered the British and Foreign Bible Society a blessing to the world.

* * * * * * *

---

* Plea for Sacramental Communion.

"Resolved, that the Secretary for Foreign Correspondence be requested to procure, while in England, for the use of this Board, all the Reports and other publications of the British and Foreign Bible Society; of the English Auxiliary Bible Societies; of the Bible Societies on the continent of Europe; and generally all such works as prove the utility of Bible Societies, and afford useful hints for their management; and to forward them without delay to the Treasurer of the Society, on whom he is hereby authorised to draw for such sums as he may necessarily expend in executing this commission."

WILLIAM JAY, Clerk pro tem. to the Board of Managers.

Before embarking, he wrote letters of tender regard to a number of his friends. Among the rest is one in which he expresses the deepest solicitude for an early student, whom, as we have already seen, he highly esteemed, and who was arraigned by his Presbytery for supposed error of doctrine:—

DR. M. TO REV. JAMES McCHORD.

New York, July 12th, 1816.

My Dear McChord: I have to ask your forgiveness for a silence toward you, for which I have no just excuse; and which I confess warrants conclusions, which, if as true in fact as in form, would mortify and humble me exceedingly. I have not forgotten, though I have neglected you. Nor have I ceased to love, though I am deeply distressed for your sake. How came you, my dear James, to fall into your notions concerning the form of our representation in the first and second Adam? You have certainly mistaken me most essentially, if you suppose, as you do, or you would not say so, that I ever taught a representation of *nature* and not of *persons* of individuals. And if your doctrines are your own *inferences* from principles laid down by me, I think they are *fallaciously* inferred, and that I can prove their fallacy. Pardon me, my friend, for declaring my conviction, a conviction that wrings my heart with anguish, that your main doctrine *tends* to subvert entirely the true and proper atoning sacrifice of our Lord Jesus, and his substitution in the room of his people. I have grievously erred in my opinion of my friend, if his soul does not revolt at the very idea. Do examine once more, and see if in moral things, *any* representation but that of *persons* is possible. I cannot enter into details, and I express myself with a *proviso*, as I have not been able to give your whole book a sufficient examination.

The state of my health compels me to take an Atlantic voyage. Providence permitting, I sail to-morrow; and only snatch a moment to assure you, appearances notwithstanding, of my tender regard for you. The God of all grace direct my friend; reclaim him as far as he is wrong; enlighten us to agree with him where he is right; and all shall be well. I cannot but hope for a comfortable *issue*.

I have behaved as ill to Mr. Bishop in the conduct of correspondence as to yourself. Be my advocate with him on this score. I am so exceedingly pressed for time, and have been so ever since I received his letter of the other day, that I must beg him to put this also into the budget of *remissions*. If it please God to restore me, I hope to be a more punctual correspondent.

Remember and pray for your affectionate

J. M. MASON.

To his son-in-law he writes: "You must live by faith, or you will live badly. I found its blessedness in early life; and so will you. Keep close to the Lord Jesus, as the Lord your strength; and you shall sing, 'The Lord will provide.' Remember your Master. Remember the *souls* committed to your charge. A word more—LOVE MY CATHARINE."

His solicitude respecting the disaffected churches of the West, may be seen in an earnest letter to one of his pupils still connected with the Seminary:—

TO MR. GEORGE JUNKIN.

NEW YORK, July 14, 1816.

MY DEAR GEORGE: A report which I hope is unfounded, has reached me since I was preparing to sail for Europe. It is that the brethren of the Scioto Synod, at least of the Presbytery of Monongahela, are taking steps to separate from the Associate Reformed Church; and that they have appointed you trials for licensure, or at least have determined to take you upon trials. Rumour is so indefinite, and fame such a liar, that I should have paid no respect to these reports, had they not come through a creditable channel, and been certified by the existing state of things. All I have to say is very brief. If the Western brethren wish to separate, let them do it in peace, with good order and in brotherly love. Let there be no *violent* disruption of ties; nothing to countenance misrule; nothing to violate the principles of the order which we have all promised to maintain. For myself, the measure appears replete with calamity to our brethren. I am sure I am not selfish. They have received much and given very little to the brethren from whom they are to withdraw. Were selfish considerations to govern us, as to pecuniary means or exemption from some vexations, nothing could be more agreeable to us or more politic for our *local* prosperity, than to encourage the disunion. But I hate splitting. I will put up with a thousand inconveniencies rather than countenance the practical disregard which is everywhere shown among us to the UNITY of the church of Christ as organized under Presbyterial order; and by none more lamentably than by some who make "Presbyterian order," the rallying point and the watchword of independent disorder. I can say for myself, and I believe for all my brethren this way, that if there *must* be a parting, we are ready to depart as becometh Christians. There is no necessity—no urgency—no plea for a RENT. As for yourself, dear George, I do hope that *you* will not suffer yourself to be instrumental in so sad a catastrophe. You must be sensible that, in ordering your trials for licensure, before you have completed your course and received your credentials, the Presbytery cannot escape from the charge of a deliberate, and highhanded act of *schism*. Whatever be their complaints, they are yet substantially *sub judice*. Take care of bad precedents—take care, according to what I have often mentioned to my pupils, of sacrificing *great general principles* to *local and temporary* expedients. The example is easily imitated. It is just up to the height of uneasy small reasoning, and petulant minds. Do not mistake so far as to give it your support. Oh,. I cannot believe that the Monongahela brethren mean to set it. Solemnly—most solemnly—I may never have another opportunity—let me caution you.

Churches, without exception, which set up separate communions in our country, in order to maintain habits which have been imported from abroad, and are in opposition to our national habits, when they cannot from the *clear* Word of God, carry men's consciences along with them, are hoisting the signal of their own destruction. They must perish. They will infallibly perish. If erected out of our body, they will perish very shortly. And the most active in promoting the schism, may live, although already advanced in life, to see themselves without congregations. I pray that you may not be persuaded to so fatal a step. I have written very hastily; written on the Lord's day, because it is the "King's business;" and I should not have had it in my power, had not an adverse wind detained me on the shore. Again I say, pause—consider. It is one thing to take a step, and another to retread it. If it please God to spare my life, and restore me to my duties here, I most fervently pray, that I may not on my return find the tears of unavailing repentance endeavouring to allay the fever of precipitate zeal. Grace be with you.

Yours affectionately,

J. M. MASON.

Among the gratifying tokens of regard which he received from his friends at this interesting juncture, none was more sincere and cordial than a letter from his esteemed nephew, written a little time before he had heard of the proposed voyage:—

TO THE REV. DR. J. M. MASON.

BALTIMORE, June 28, 1816.

MY DEAR UNCLE: I employ Mr. Heyer, who leaves this city for New York to-day, as the bearer of our congratulations, to yourself and family, on your late matrimonial *speculation*,* if so I may term it—you having denominated mine an adventure. Particularly would we congratulate Catherine and our new cousin. Our best wishes and prayers attend their union. May it not be severed until they are prepared to receive an ample recompense for such a dispensation by an introduction into everlasting glory!

---

* The marriage of his daughter, which had taken place on the 18th of this month.

My Eliza joins with me in expressing much concern for your own health. Every report respecting you only brings evil tidings, and increases our fear that your health is still declining. There are many things which render this a very affecting circumstance to me. Not simply the memory of my mother, of whom I cannot yet think without the strongest emotion, nor yet the living proof of your relation to me in your continued kindness, though, my dear uncle, few love you more; but your connexion with the church and the evident benefits resulting from your labours, create many apprehensions. I confess I feel acutely on this subject. What I hourly learn, I think only calculated to disclose to me the declining interests of religion in our land. I know indeed that God may smite only to heal; that he who conducted the Gospel with so much rapidity, by means of His dispersed ministers, from Jerusalem to the villages of the Samaritans, and thence to the dark corners of Ethiopia, can bring forth His church "clear as the sun, fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners." I know he will ultimately do it; but the course of His providence at present does not indicate that the work of judgment is done, or that the darkness has yet passed by. The warrior has retired only to furbish his weapons, that he may come forth to the battle with redoubled terror. Perhaps these are but the bodings of some gloomy hour; certain it is they can depress me in my most cheerful moments. Luther had a remedy for all such evils; and our best way is, with him to take refuge in the 46th Psalm.

I understand that preaching exhausts and depresses you much. I thought so when I was with you. Will you permit your pupil and nephew to remind you of the instructions you gave him on the subject of preaching under similar circumstances; how much you undervalued the arguments by which I endeavoured to justify my course, considering it so improper, because injurious, as to be wholly indefensible? If these things were correct in their application to one who might have been called off without being missed—whose place could instantly have been more than filled by another—what shall I say to one, who by the same course is, so far as my information goes, hastening an event, which, come when it may, will shroud the whole church in mourning? Forgive the freedom of my affection, which has hitherto shrunk back diffident, but agitated, and now cannot refrain. Am I permitted to address my Preceptor so? "Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things."

Your affectionate nephew,
JOHN M. DUNCAN.

His farewell interview with his family, on embarking, presented a scene which was at once tender and edifying—showing a beautiful combination of domestic affection and Christian faith. He first kneeled and offered up a most humble and pathetic prayer. He then sang, with unusual force, the whole of Newton's excellent hymn, "The Lord will provide." After this, amidst irrepressible emotions, he embraced each one separately, with a word of comfort and counsel to each. Finally, uttering a few short, but expressive and fervent ejaculations to heaven, in behalf of them all, he left the house—several of his children and friends accompanying him to the Battery, whence he was conveyed in a boat to the ship lying at a distance in the bay.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

1816.

IN ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, AND PARIS.

His Voyage—Arrival in England—Gosport—Letters to Mrs. M.—Mrs. Bogue—London—Mr. Pritt—Lord Erskine—Voyage to Scotland—His Uncle—Mr. Pillan's School—Mrs. Marshall—Seals of his Ministry.

An account of his voyage is given, on its termination, in a letter soon forwarded

TO MRS. MASON.

Southampton, August 9, 1816.

I embrace the earliest opportunity of acquainting you, my dearest Nancy, with the comfortable termination of our voyage, and our safe landing on the British shore, after a generally delightful passage of twenty-three days. From the time of leaving Sandy Hook, we had most pleasant weather; cold for the season, but not disagreeable; fair winds, with the exception of a calm on the first Sabbath; a slight head wind part of one night, and a second short calm of about twelve hours, till we came within or near what seamen call the "chops of the channel." A strong north-easter then encountered us, and was succeeded after the second calm with very stiff breezes, approaching to a gale, and thick misty atmosphere, which bounded our horizon within very short limits indeed. We had no observation of our latitude for two days. Our reckoning was out; there are various currents in the channel; and not a soul on board *knew*, but every one *conjectured* whereabouts we were. The Captain became much disturbed; and, in order to clear effectually the rocks of Scilly, steered a south, or south-south-east course, the wind blowing hard from south-south and south-west. About eleven o'clock, A.M., on the 7th, a sudden cry of "land!" and great bustle on deck, brought us all instantly above. The atmosphere had, *that moment*, lighted up and discovered the *French* coast within five or six miles, the ship running directly toward the shore! How kind, how condescending is the care of our Heavenly Father! It extorted from one of the passengers, whose religion is his lightest incumbrance, the involuntary homage of a conscience enlightened for a moment, like the atmosphere, "This is a Providential interposition!" That acknowledgment will one day be remembered. We spoke, shortly after, a French vessel, just out of Morlaix (twenty-seven miles off), for Havre de Grace, the Captain of which spoke English, and exerted himself with an interest and an earnestness which could not be surpassed, by words, by signs, by repetitions of both, to make us thoroughly understand where we were; and of course to ascertain how we should steer. You know I am not an overweening admirer of Frenchmen; but this, so valuable a kindness to us, struck me forcibly, and affected me. I hope I shall be able to bring back proofs to justify a more favourable opinion than I have been accustomed to entertain of that singular race. Yesterday morning, at nine o'clock, we made, on a different tack, the British coast. It proved to be the Isle of Wight. At eleven o'clock we were boarded by a Pilot, with whom the cabin passengers immediately embarked for this city, then fifty miles off. We had a beautiful afternoon, the first that had been seen in the channel for a fortnight. With a fine breeze, we past swiftly along the most elegantly variegated, and wildly picturesque scenery of rural cultivation, and retreat, and enjoyment, which ever greeted my vision. Before sunset we disembarked on Johnny Bull's premises; found an interesting old city; extremely civil customhouse officers; a shoal of subordinate hangers on; teazing as mosquitoes, adhesive as leeches; and very clean, snug quarters, with quiet, abundance, courtesy, and comfort, at the "Coach and Horses Inn."

My health is perceptibly better; my respiration freer, my strength increased. My chest, however, is still blockaded, and my feverishness continues at night. Ebenezer has greatly profited by the voyage. He is quite stout and well, and his habits of body improved. In two or three days we expect to be in London. This goes, in order to be *quick*, a long way round about, by Liverpool. Our tenderest love to the dear ones whom we have left. I remember the kindness of our friends and hope to be able to show that it was not ill bestowed. Tell them so, when they ask about me. Adieu, my Love. Very shortly expect to hear again from your affectionate,

J. M. MASON.

The use of the plural number towards the close of this letter will be readily understood, by recollecting that he was accompanied by his son Ebenezer, then about fourteen years old, and his interesting young friend, Matthias Bruen.

The progress of his journey is noted in subsequent letters:—

TO MRS. MASON.

LONDON, August 13, 1816.

MY DEAREST: I wrote you on the 9th, from Southampton where I landed, leaving the ship off the Isle of Wight. Referring you to this letter for particulars of our voyage, I embrace an opportunity of a vessel sailing this afternoon for Philadelphia to inform you generally of our motions since. We left Southampton in a post-chaise for Gosport, opposite Portsmouth, on Saturday the 10th, and arrived there in the afternoon—visiting in our way the stupendous ruin, Netley Abbey. I was much disappointed in missing Dr. Bogue, who had been several weeks absent on an evangelical embassy to Holland and the Netherlands, with a view of stirring them up to a vigorous coöperation in those gracious efforts which distinguish the present age of the Christian world. He was agreeably surprised, Mrs. Bogue tells us, at finding the object of his visit in a great degree anticipated, and the spirit of the Dutch much more expanded, zealous and active in the holiest of causes, than he had hoped. With Mrs. Bogue, a venerable lady somewhat resembling Mrs. Graham in heart and spirit, we spent almost the whole of the Lord's day and evening, when not attending upon public worship. You cannot tell, unless you have experienced it, how sweet is a Christian Sabbath after several weeks of exclusion from its due observance. I understand better than ever, at least I think I do, the emotions which breathed out through the lips of the Psalmist, that fervent apostrophe, "Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house and the place where thine honour dwelleth."

On Monday, at eight o'clock, A.M., we took coach for this metropolis, and arrived at seven last evening—seventy-eight miles. We have not yet had time to adjust our little matters, nor even to procure lodgings. The *Canton* is still below the city a considerable distance, being detained by contrary wind. Our health is as usual; Ebenezer hearty; myself mending, but slowly. Exertion fatigues me soon, though not so soon as when I left you. My feverishness is a regular companion at night, yet slighter than it was. I have not seen or heard of Dr. Tillary as yet; to look for a man here, is like looking for a stray pigeon on the Alleghany mountains. I hope to get the requisite intelligence this afternoon; but cannot keep my letter open, as the ship's bag will be removed before I could add a paragraph respecting our friend. I knew not of the conveyance till two or three minutes before I began to write. I write in the house of my excellent friend, James Pritt, Esq., a worthy Baptist, a clear-headed man, and a warm-hearted Christian, who is for holding fellowship with all who hold fellowship with Christ.

TO MRS. MASON.

LONDON, August 24, 1816.

MY DEAREST NANCY: Since my last, an opportunity by a gentleman, Mr. W. Shaw, returning directly to New York, occurs too favourably to be omitted. The circumstances of the weather are unfriendly to my improvement. Till these last forty-eight hours, there has not been a dry day since my arrival; and I am told it has been the same for nearly four months. The hay is nearly ruined throughout the country. It is now lying in immense quantities wet in the fields. There has not been sunshine enough to ripen the grain; and great apprehensions are entertained for the fate of the crops. Fruit has been and is extremely abundant; but of inferior flavour, and acid, in consequence of the wet.

I found Dr. Tillary, and dined with him the day after my last letter. I never saw him in better health or spirits. He set off for Scotland on Monday. We mean to do the same next week, if the Lord please, on Thursday. We shall go in the Leith Packet, which will save us some twelve or fourteen guineas—no small matter in my finances, as travelling is very expensive.

I have just had a friendly call from Lord Erskine. He is very communicative, and kind to Americans. He furnishes me with letters of some importance to Scotland.

An active bookseller has offered to print my 'Plea,' on the same terms that I had in New York; viz., to take the expense and risk, and divide the profits with me. This, whatever it may turn out, is more liberal than I had a right to expect; as any one might publish it without a farthing's compensation to me.

My friends are, many of them, out of town; but I have met with the greatest kindness. On Tuesday, Ebenezer and I spend the day with Mr. H. F. Burder, who married an old favourite of mine, Miss Hardcastle.

My next will probably be from the city of smoke—Auld Reeky.

TO MRS. MASON.

EDINBURGH, September 9, 1816.

I HOPE my dearest Nancy has received or will have received in due season my letters from England of the 9th 13th and 24th ult. We were detained in London a week longer than we had intended, by circumstances somewhat provoking, but hardly worth relating.

Compelled by a necessity of our neighbour's making, we sailed from London at 9 A.M. on the 1st inst., came to anchor near the Nore, below the mouth of the Thames, about 6 P.M., lay there some twelve hours, and reached Leith harbour about 10 o'clock on the night of the 4th, effecting a passage of nearly five hundred miles in eighty-four hours. We could not see the propriety of lying by so long; but our Captain, who is an expert seaman, though a very bad Christian, snuffed a gale of wind out at sea, and would not stir. He was right; for the next papers contained unpleasant accounts of vessels driven on shore, wrecks, and other disasters, not many leagues from us—all which calamities we mercifully escaped. A mercy of little less value was the rapidity of our passage. We got out of our den on Thursday morning; and from a more uncomfortable dungeon I hope never to flee. If the praisers of these same "Smacks" ever persuade me to put my foot on board one of them again, unless driven by insurmountable necessity, I shall grant them something like the evil one's prerogative, of first tempting, and then torturing.

My venerable uncle, uniform in his excellence, received us in the most affectionate and touching manner. I met him in the passage of his house, where it was somewhat dark, and my face was from the light of the door. Though he was expecting us, he hesitated a moment till I spoke. He then clasped me to his bosom, but for a moment could not articulate. He immediately recovered, and the gush of his heart found vent as he held Ebenezer by one hand and me by the other. His tranquillity soon resumed its ascendancy; but still there were fluctuations and tumults of various feelings. He was glad at meeting us, but his wife was not there! his Margaret was not there! Their place was empty! Their voice was in the choir above, far out of the reach of mortal sense! In the disasters of the times, he has lost his fortune, but neither his friends, nor his serenity. He has lived among the "brothers who are born for adversity." He ranks as high as ever in society, and has a comfortable provision in a reputable office with light personal labour. His partner is a son of Sir Harry Moncrieff, the most manly and dignified clergyman in the Church of Scotland.

In about four weeks I go back to London, and thence to Paris.

TO MRS. MASON.

ROTHSAY, ISLAND OF BUTE, Sept. 26, 1816.

I NEED not tell my beloved with what mingled emotions I opened her welcome letter of the 10th August. It was handed to me the day before yesterday at Glasgow, and relieved me from the pains of disappointed expectation. Mr. Bruen had received a fortnight before, by the same conveyance, despatches from home; and I could not divine how there should be none for me, unless they had gone round about from Liverpool to London, and lay there unforwarded, which proved to be the case. Let me bless the Father of our mercies for His kindness to you, and our family, since we parted. Could it be otherwise? Has He not always loaded us with His blessings manifold? And was He now to throw away the precious property which my faith —I dare say it unhesitatingly—my *faith* entrusted to His care? It is infinitely consoling to have such a Father on whom to cast our burden. And He will yet do for us great and holy things, although He has not promised not to show us "great and sore troubles." But should such be His good will, He will likewise show us His holy covenant, and teach us to glory even in tribulations.

The death of our dear Charlotte Matthews is a heavy stroke. I do not wonder that it almost crushed E. I was not prepared for it, and feel it sorely. She has been, almost from her infancy, so much like one of my own daughters, that her departure is to me a real bereavement. To her own, and to her father's family, the occasion is fraught with whatever can depress the man and try the Christian. Yet there was the light of life in her death. Praised be our King, for adding another ray of his glory to his crown as the Redeemer!

Of my excursions, it is impossible to say more than that I have everywhere been received with demonstrations of the most kind regard. Bruen has shared them all. And he deserves it. His correctness, manliness, and modesty, have endeared him to myself, and recommended him to others. Should he ever return to Britain, he will need no letters of introduction.

I have had an interview with Mr. Pillans, rector of the High School at Edinburgh. The reputation of this Seminary outstrips almost, if not altogether, every other in the Island. From the outline which Mr. Pillans, and from the productions of boys of thirteen and fourteen, I am satisfied that it is precisely the sort of school I have been longing for; and do not perceive it without some self-gratulation that its main features are the same with those by which I had intended to distinguish a school for Columbia College.

I write this in the house of Mrs. Marshall, the widow of Dr. Marshall, brother of Mrs. Graham. I cannot tell how gratified this truly good woman was with my visiting her, and introducing myself upon the credit of my acquaintance with her glorified relative. A thousand affectionate inquiries she made about Mr. Bethune and family; and kind attentions she showed to myself of the most vigilant and unaffected sort.

I set out for Greenock in an hour; return to Glasgow on Saturday; to Edinburgh next week; and mount my horse for traversing England the week after.

My best affections to Grandma and the children. Tell Phe to congratulate, on my behalf, her friend Cornelia on becoming *Strong;* and Monsieur Pascal on his *Kaning* at last.*

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER TO MISS E. P. MASON FROM HER FATHER, DATED LIVERPOOL, OCTOBER 24, 1816.

"I lodge at Mr. George M. Woolsey's, whose wife is sister to Mrs. Levi Coit and Mrs. George Brinckerhoff. This lady, like her sisters, is a most charming woman. Frank, cheerful, unostentatious, full of the kind affections, and delighted with diffusing comfort around her. Mr. W. lives in elegance; and has heaped hospitalities upon me. Every accommodation of his establishment is at my command. *Home*, my dear daughter, is a word full of the heart, and has nothing to come into competition with its tender associations. But one of our highest temporal mercies when we are abroad, undoubtedly is that friendly reception among strangers which renders our residence among them everything that it can be, and not be home itself."

In the course of his journey through England he had an opportunity of seeing at Chester, a gentleman and lady who regarded themselves as seals of his ministry, having experienced the benefit of his public ministrations during their sojourn in New York, several years before. The grateful feelings with which they remembered him, they afterwards expressed in a letter from which we take a short extract:—

" Your visit, and the affectionate kindness with which you treated us, were gratifications which we had hardly ventured to anticipate; but which we shall cherish with thankful, and we trust, with profitable remembrance. Our minds were carried back to the obligations which we owe you as the instrument in God's gracious hand of all we have known and experienced of the power and the preciousness of the Gospel of peace. And while we could not suppress the feelings of regret at losing so quickly what we prized so highly, we were carried forward to that day when we shall meet, we trust, around our Father's throne, and dwell forever together near his face, where sin and sorrow and separation will not be known. Though we shall enjoy but a small share of your society next spring, yet we feel no disposition to grudge others the privilege which we are denied. For their sakes whom you most love, and their's to whom you minister, and above all for the cause and kingdom of our Lord Christ, we pray that your health may be speedily restored, and your life and labours long continued to the church. We have no wish to tax your patience, but we shall not be happy without hearing how you succeed in the great object of your projected journey. We entreat that you will remember our anxiety occasionally, and write us a few lines whenever you have leisure. Mrs. R. unites with me in kindest regards to you. Nor do we forget your fellow traveller, though our feelings are at some moments not unmingled with something very like envy."

---

* The Rev. Paschal N. Strong married to Miss Cornelia Kane.

CHAPTER XXXV.

1816—1817.

ON THE CONTINENT.

Letters to Mrs. Mason—Paris—Mr. C. King—Grateful Reflections—Religious state of France—His Health—Rapid Sketch of his Journey—Letter to his Daughter, Mrs. V. V.—Tour through Holland—Preached at Brussels—Popery—Interesting Events at Geneva—Letter from Rev. M. Bruen—Letter from Dr. Malan.

TO MRS. MASON.

Paris, December 6, 1816.

Thus far have I proceeded in my pilgrimage toward the South of France, and the *classic land.* The cold which I mentioned in my letter from Calais, as having arrested me in London, and continued to trouble me, is almost entirely gone; and I am more recruited than at any time since I left New York. The atmosphere of this metropolis, though preferable in winter to that of London, is yet unpleasant to American feeling. It almost always lowers. A fine blue sky is a great rarity; and yet the weather has not that *chilling* quality which belongs to the north-easters of New York, and still more to the drizzle of Glasgow, Edinburgh, and London. The streets here have constantly on their surface a thin mud, very similar to that of our middle pavements after a November shower. You stick and slip at the same moment. Nothing can be more unpleasant. The stream of water running down the gutters, sometimes in the middle, sometimes at the sides, of a great many streets, precludes the possibility of their being dry in cold weather, when they are not coated with ice. The houses are very cold; stone staircases, brick floors—the bricks being often hexagonal, so as to make the floor resemble, in its six-sided figures, the compartments of a honey-comb. The fire-places deep, awkward, calculated well for warm smoking whatever is in the chimney; but for nothing so little as for warming the room. Wood very scarce, very dear, and very light, though dry; not equal to our good oak. A carpet is a luxury. Many of the floors are of oak cut into narrow strips, and curiously laid down, so as to form a variety of figures, almost as great as those in a carpet. Furniture splendid; outside of houses splendid; public edifices and gardens splendid. Splendour is the reigning passion. Everything for show; little or nothing for that old-fashioned affair called *comfort*. The French have no term for it in their language—a pretty good proof that they are without the *thing*, notwithstanding our Ambassador's opinion, that they know as much of it and enjoy as much as other people, only *talk* less about it. An absolute incredibility! That a Frenchman should talk about everything else but his comfort! He never learned to *smuggle* an article of that sort.

But I must have done with this chattering, or you will have a volume. Description is out of the question. I came to get health, by change of air, of scenery, of society, and by exercise. In a few days we set our faces southward. We mean to make a rapid tour down the Rhone; over into Italy; away to Geneva; down the Rhine to the land of Mynheer; through the Netherlands; and over again to England by the end of April. Some of our expectations may be disappointed.

Mrs. Gallatin enquired very kindly after you this morning. I am writing at the house of Mr. C. King, whose attentions have been very marked, and demand my gratitude. Mrs. K. presented him about two months ago with a young William Gracie, that would merit a place among sister Brown's "little elephants." Mr. and Mrs. K. with their four children are all well. Mrs. K. very anxious to get home again.

TO MRS. MASON.

PARIS, January 12, 1817.

MY DEAR NANCY: My heart has been made to rejoice with thanksgiving, by the welcome letters of John and Euphemia. Blessed be the Father of mercies for all his goodness to me and mine! for preserving the health of some, restoring that of others, and keeping all. When I committed my precious ones to Israel's Shepherd, I think I was enabled to do it in faith, not wavering; nor do I now doubt. My soul magnifies the Lord! My spirit rejoices in God my Saviour! He that is mighty has done, and is doing, and will do, great things for us; and holy is his name; and his mercy is on them that fear him, from generation to generation! I blush, and am ashamed, when I consider how I have requited his manifold loving kindnesses. These, and not his terrors—not his scourges—not his desolating judgments—has he always employed, and still employs, for restoring my wandering soul, and leading me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Oh! he knows my frame, and he remembers that I am but dust. And therefore as a father pitieth his children, so does he pity me; and therefore all his dispensations toward me, though sometimes trying and mysterious, are loving kindnesses. These melt me down; break my stubbornness; teach my wayward spirit; prostrate me before him. My heart's desire and prayer is, that if it shall please him to establish my health, as I have encouraging prospects, and to bring me back again to my country and to his sanctuary, I may be devoted, with all my faculties and affections, to his most honourable service, in promoting, as the highest of all interests, and my own chiefest joy, the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I cannot tell you how infinitely vain the pomps and vanities of this world appear to me when I look at them all gay and glittering as they are, in this "Vanity Fair."

TO MRS. MASON.

PARIS, March 27, 1817.

MY DEAREST: The evening before last, I returned from my tour to the South of France. My health has been regularly improving; of late more rapidly than at first—with occasional checks however to its progress. My cough is gone; at least so little of it is left as not to be worth naming. The difficult respiration which troubled me so severely, has almost entirely ceased. Indeed I never feel it, unless in mounting a long, steep ascent too hastily. I have recovered my appetite. My sleep is as it used to be. My strength also recruits, and my appearance is that of health. Yet there are indications that my recovery is not sufficiently *confirmed*—that this *grizzle* of health, so to speak, must harden into *bone*—before I can resume my wonted labours without danger of a relapse.

My heart yearns to be back again; to escape from this wilderness of briars and thorns; from this land of darkness and of the shadow of death; and to employ with more zeal and love and constancy, than I ever knew before, all my faculties and affections in the service of that Redeemer, whose cause is unutterably more precious to my eyes than ever; and whose graciousness to me in this my religious exile, surpassing all his former kindnesses, "filling my mouth with good things"—yea, "my soul with marrow and fatness"—has laid upon me an amount of obligations which I am unable to calculate, far less to repay. But what I have and am, my sinfulness excepted, is all His own; and by His grace, I will render to my Saviour-God, the things which are God's. But ardent as is this my desire, I have no doubt that my duty is yet to wait for a little while; and then my confidence is, that I shall come to my family and my flock, in something of the "fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ."

To write you a particular account of what I have seen and heard, and where I have been, is impossible. A volume and not a letter would be requisite for that. Summarily, I left Paris on the 15th January; passed on to the South—visiting Lyons, famous for its silks and its sufferings; for here the butcheries of the Revolution displayed their full-sized horrors. The process of the national axe, the guillotine, though in perpetual motion, was too slow for the fiends who directed it; and the miserable inhabitants, gathered together in the heart of the city strewed in death by thousands at a stroke under vollies of grapeshot from a train of artillery—so that the great square, La Place de Belle Cour, literally floated with the blood of the slain. Thence I went on to Avignon—for many years the residence of the Popes; and yet bearing abundant marks of the *enlightening* influence of the "Holy See." Thence to Orange—once the property of the Dutch Stadtholder, though in the bosom of France; and a strong-hold of Protestantism. Thence to Nismes—seat of the late atrocious persecution of the Protestants (only two years ago), about which my Lord Wellington, probably from ignorance—and Mr. Hyde de Neuville, certainly not from ignorance—have *officially* uttered such enormous falsehoods to the governments of Great Britain and the United States. To Montpelier—the beautiful resort of invalids. To Marseilles—the most elegant and cleanly city in France; renowned for its Lazaretto, its dread of the Plague, its commerce, and its inflexible quarantine. Her Royal Highness, the daughter of the King of Naples, and now the consort of the Duc de Berri, could not, with all the influence of her sex and rank, and that of two courts to back it, obtain a greater relaxation of the rule, than to preform quarantine *only eighteen days*, although no contagious disorder was pretended to be on board, or at Naples. To Toulon, the Mediterranean station of the French navy; where we were not permitted to see one of the wonders of Europe—the arsenal, and the military foundry; because we were "*etrangers*." The scowling brow and surly tone of the commanding officer, showed that he took us for Englishmen, whom all ranks of the people here concur in hating with the most profound sincerity. So, to mortify us, Monsieur le Commandant growled out a *fib*—a small matter, which costs a Frenchman little trouble and no remorse. To Frejus, inseparably connected with Bonaparte—being the spot from which he embarked for his new empire of Elba, and near which he landed to retake his old empire of France, merely by way of *diversion* previous to his drubbing at Waterloo, and his pilgrimage to St. Helena. To Nice, the first city of Italy after quitting France on that route—remarkable for its delightful climate and its healthiness. Oranges were in full growth in the open air in February. Though immediately on the very edge of the sea whose waves wash the walls of its promenade, the atmosphere is perfectly dry. To Geneva, by our old road, on which we returned as far as Valence on the Rhone, the direct passage being very dangerous, if not impracticable for a light vehicle.

At Geneva, I found myself at home; the courtesy of the inhabitants, and their social manners, resembling, in many things those of New York, transported me, as by enchantment, to an immeasurable distance from the heartless and frigid solitude of the French. Here I met with our old acquaintance, Mr. Duby, in very snug circumstances. No man is more respected at Geneva. From both himself and his lady, I received attentions which I cannot remember but with gratitude. He retains much affection for New York, and speaks very feelingly of the friendships showed him there. He has a son grown up who is preparing for the ministry. Twenty days in this city, which owes all its importance to the sagacity of that peerless man, John Calvin, flew away as if Time had mounted an additional pair of wings, and I left it on the 20th instant with unfeigned regret. Five days and an half brought us back again to this hateful metropolis of frivolity and vice.

Thus have I travelled in France, Italy, and Switzerland, in the course of a little more than two months, nearly two thousand miles without any untoward accident. The weather, except in returning from Geneva, when it was somewhat cold, has been uniformly delightful. My heart swells when I recall the goodness and mercy which have followed me; and I cannot but regard them as ominous of blessings in store.

Next week I set off on a flying tour to Holland, whence I propose to return to England, so as to be in London by the 6th of May; the British and Foreign Bible Society holding its annual meeting on the 7th, and the London Missionary Society their's on the 14th. After "assisting," as the French speak when they only mean "to be present," at those meetings, I have to make a second journey to Scotland, which will consume a month or six weeks more; and shall probably close my European expedition at Liverpool, whence it is my present purpose to embark for that dear, dear America. The Angel of God's presence save you all!

Extracts of a letter to Miss E. P. Mason from her father, dated Paris, April 3,1817, alluding to information recently received :—

"Mr. G. Morris is dead! Mr. Dallas I hear is dead! Dr. Strong, of Hartford, is dead! Dr. Dwight is dead! Oh how is Death doing his work! Glory of this world, what art thou *now* to them who sought thee, and have left thee forever? Word of eternal life! Honour that cometh from God! Saviour! Sanctifier! Father, Brother, Friend, Advocate, Portion! What are ye *not* now to them who have gone to receive the recompense of reward?

"I saw on Sabbath the ceremony of the Royal family going to church. How my soul pitied these splendid miserables! Then felt I the force of the wise man's exclamation, 'Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, all is vanity.' Folly is bound up in their hearts while they live, and after that they go down to the dead. There are few kings with whom I should choose to go down. Poor mortals, they have their rewards! I should think an exchange of my fireside in Warren Street for the Palace of Tuilleries and the diadem of Empire a very silly bargain even for this world; but for the next, be my lot with the unknown to 'the princes of this world'—with the children of faith in the faithful word—children who are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ!"

TO MRS. C. VAN VECHTEN, SCHENECTADY.

PARIS, April 3, 1817.

MY DAUGHTER: Your letter of the 9th December I received on the 26th of last month. It had been waiting a considerable time at Paris, whither I returned on the 25th from an excursion of more than two months to the South. During that interval, I visited Lyons, Avignon, Orange, Nismes, Montpelier, Marseilles, Toulon, Nice and Geneva—travelling about eighteen hundred miles. My health has been growing continually better, but by slow degrees. The inroad upon the stamina of my frame was very deep; a little more and it had been vital. I could not myself be sensible of its extent and power, but by the obstinacy with which it kept possession. Through the great kindness of our Heavenly Father, I have been almost perfectly restored; and nothing is now wanting, as to my bodily condition, to enable me to resume my labours in the holiest and most heavenly of human employments, but the consolidation, so to speak, of my newly-acquired health. Goodness and mercy, my dear Catharine, have indeed followed me. In a season almost without example for deluges of rain in various parts of Europe, I have been favoured with perfectly fine weather during my whole tour. In Scotland, England, and France, I have arrived at my different stations with the commencement of the fine weather; have had it almost continually during my stay; and have left them successively just before the rains began again; so that while the papers were filled with accounts of the floods in all directions, both where I had been and where I expected to go, I had sunshine and most delightful temperature. For four weeks together, in January and February, in the south of France and the borders of Italy, there was scarcely a cloud on the face of heaven, and very little necessity for fire. At this moment the atmosphere is as mild and genial as could be wished. I returned to Paris the very day the rain ceased. Monsieur Sol threw off his night-cap the next morning, and has not put it on but for a few minutes since.

You will wonder that I went into Italy no further than Nice. My time hardly allowed of a trip to the metropolis of arts and apostasy. Yet I should have attempted it, had I not been hindered by other things. It is impossible to go by land from Nice to Genoa in a carriage. It was almost impossible to go on mules at that season of the year—the ice and snow on the mountains covering the road along the brink of tremendous precipices, and putting your life in jeopardy every moment. The wind was directly ahead all the while I remained at Nice, The only water conveyance is an open, clumsy, filthy vessel. called a felucca. The navigators are ignorant and lazy, and a sail of thirty-six hours was likely to be protracted to a fortnight, with the additional benefit of being put every now and then ashore in an Italian village amidst heaps of "comparisons," (comparisons are "*odoriferous*," says Mrs. Slip-slop,) and millions of animated beings which love to dwell about the *persons* of modern Romans. So the scheme was given up. It was well. Such heavy snows fell shortly after, that my passage of the Alps would have been shut against my return by land. I might have been obliged to take a passage from Leghorn to Marseilles, and been quaranteened there for a month or two. Besides, some of the highways are infested with brigands, so as to render travelling in Italy dangerous. Six gentlemen on their way to Naples, a few weeks ago, were attacked by a band of armed ruffians, were robbed, and two of them murdered. Thus have all things been ordered right. To-morrow, if the Lord will, I set off for Holland by the way of Brussels, and calculate upon being in London a month hence. After another expedition to Scotland, I propose to finish my land tour at Liverpool; thence to sail for New York; and I hope to embrace my precious ones in the month of August.

Yes, my daughter, my *precious* ones. For very, very dear, and deservedly so, they are to my heart. Few men have such ample reason of thankfulness for *family mercies*, as I have. Few children have such a mother to love and venerate. Few brothers and sisters are so knit together in harmony, and few parents can be so happy in their children. I cannot embody my emotions in words; but my daughter has only to cast her eye inward to find their counterpart. What an accumulation of bounties! It has always been God's method, to subdue and melt and mould me by *loving kindnesses.* I ought surely to be a tender father to my dutiful children; for he has been unutterably tender to me even when undutiful. I trust him for my children also. "I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed," is a promise to which all the tendrils of my heart cling. May he be my Catharine's help and hope; the strength of her heart and her portion forever!

Give my love to Jacob. Tell him to be of good courage; to be faithful to his master. I would say to him, in the words of Paul to Timothy, "Thou therefore, my son, be strong," not in thyself, remember, but "in the *grace that is in Christ Jesus.*" The Lord bless my children.

TO MRS. MASON.

ANTWERP, April 16th, 1817.

MY DEAR NANCY: I wrote to you from Paris on the 28th ult., if I rightly recollect; and also to Abraham; and again from the same place on the 4th ult., to Euphemia, John, and Catharine. Again to you from Brussels on the 11th. I am now on my way to Holland, and finding a vessel about to sail for Boston, I drop a line lest the former letters should miscarry. To-day, at 2 o'clock, I set out for Utrecht through Breda; expect to reach Utrecht to-morrow at twelve, and to be at Amsterdam by Saturday night. Thence my route is to Haarlaem, to Leyden, to the Hague, to Rotterdam, to Helvoetsluys, when I expect to take the packet for Harwick in England, so as to be in London in time for the meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society on the 7th of May.

You see that my motions must be very rapid; and great cause of thankfulness have I that the state of my health does not forbid it. The weather has been exceedingly changeable for a week or ten days back; cold, mild, clear, cloudy, rain, hail, sunshine, in quick succession. I have taken cold in consequence of these variations, but not in any great degree. Yet I feel that my strength needs confirmation.

At Brussels I preached last Lord's day to a small congregation in the church where the King attends worship when he is in that city. Four ladies of the court were present; one or two of them, intimate friends of the Queen, and said to be, not only "honourable," but "devout" women—Christians of eminent attainment, and who have long "adorned the doctrine of God our Saviour." The Queen also is viewed as a woman of piety. It is somewhat encouraging, when those who are of "the salt of the earth," are found "in kings' houses." His Majesty is mortally hated by the Catholics in Belgium, on account of protecting the Protestants, and giving them equal civil privileges with themselves. The spirit of Popery is unaltered and unalterable. If any one who has the least regard for the Gospel of Jesus Christ, should begin to think favourably of it, or imagine that we have an interest in common with it, let him visit these countries, open his eyes upon objects which surround him in every direction, and wonder at the imposition which he has practised upon himself. It is impossible to give in writing a just idea of the prevailing abominations; the broad, coarse idolatry; the foul, terrifying pollutions of Papal lands—always growing worse and worse in proportion as you approach the seat of the beast—the abode of the man of "the seven hills"—the palace of the scarlet-clad, blood-intoxicated "mother of harlots."

I am called away to go for my passport. Adieu.

In the foregoing letters, but little is said of particular occurrences in the several places which Dr. Mason visited. So far as Geneva is concerned, this omission may be, in some measure, supplied from other sources. A letter found in Bruen's Memoirs, p. 23, dated March 26th, 1817, furnish a key to certain events which transpired both at that time and afterwards:—

"It is to be lamented that so many of Calvin's successors should be unworthy of that honour. But it gives us great pleasure to find, that probably the worst time has gone by; especially among the young ministers and the students, there is a strong inclination towards the truth. So little real knowledge does the course of lectures given by the Professors afford them, that they are anxious to seize every opportunity of instruction. A Scotch gentleman (Mr. Haldane) who has been there some time, has a number who visit him regularly to study the Scriptures—a subject to which most of the Professors do not think of turning their attention. One of the things which made my time glide by so rapidly, was the number who came continually to have their difficulties explained, and the doctrines of grace illustrated. The evening before we came away, at one time, Dr. Mason had, I think, fourteen. It is almost impossible to conceive with what anxiety they inquire, and the influence it has when they find persons from remote regions answering immediately the current objections to these doctrines. It could not fail to strike me as very remarkable, that we should have arrived there just at this time, when the line is becoming marked; and it is very evident that Dr. Mason's character and instructions will not be without effect. This visit then may prove of high consequence to the best interests of the church."

Subsequent and connected events are mentioned in a communication to Dr. Mason from the same pen :—

GENEVA, Nov. 7, 1817.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND: I thank you most sincerely for the kind letter which you sent to me from Liverpool. From the winds which have prevailed during the past month, I indulge the hope that you are now safely at home. I am once more at Geneva, in our old apartment, thinking of you, and of all the good and evil that has taken place since we were here together.

But as this is to be a letter of business, I proceed to the history. You may recollect that a few days after we left this city, there was a paragraph in the Paris papers, stating that an English Methodist had established himself at Geneva. This was Mr. Drummund, a partner in an opulent banking house in London, and who, I fear, is somewhat in the ideas of those whose secession from the Church of England has made so much noise. His residence here has been productive of the most important consequences. Mr. Haldane was still here some time after our departure; and if Mr. D. be inclined to Antinomianism, as I suppose Mr. H. is not at all, yet their sentiments are in unison on the points of Baptism and church discipline. They of course consider it the greatest service they could render the Church of Christ, to produce a separation in the Church of Geneva.* The conduct of the Pastors speedily gave them an occasion. For these, alarmed by the instruction which the students were in the habit of receiving from Mr. H , and after his departure from Mr. D., used their best endeavours to prevent their attendance.

Before our visit, M. Cellerier preached a sermon in which he spoke of "the dangerous error of Arianism;" which produced from one of the opposite party the sermon of which we heard so much—declaring "that it does not concern us to know whether Jesus Christ be God or man, provided we adore him." Against this sermon of the Pastor Heyer, M. Cellerier protested in the Company. The people, who never before had imagined that there was much serious difference of opinion between their pastors, began to express their surprise. Then our friend Malan preached the sermon which I hope you will receive when this letter reaches you. It makes a great deal of noise. The Arians discover in it *une tête tout ă fait exaltée;* the orthodox think they see the truth stated in a manner calculated rather to repel, than to gain over their opponents. The pastors resolved to put an end to the debate by summary process—which certainly was the wisest way for men who are much better informed on Botany than Theology; and more capable of telling how many pages there are in the treatises of Rousseau, than how many chapters in Paul's Epistle to the Romans. Though not chargeable with direct infidelity, they certainly are with the most flagrant and almost incredible neglect of the Scriptures. Accordingly, "the promise," a copy of which I sent you the moment I obtained it in London, is drawn up and agreed upon; and we have "the venerable Company of Pastors of Geneva" enacting that no one shall take up and treat explicitly in a whole sermon, or part of a sermon, of the Divinity of Christ, original sin, efficacious grace, and predestination. To this act, Malan courageously refused to submit; and they in consequence have forbidden him to preach till he does "*lui out defundu la chaire.*" Many things which occurred, I leave him to narrate as he has promised to do in a letter which I have promised to send with this one. He has suffered many persecutions and is regarded as the person who has thrown in the apple of discord. While he suffered in this way, he was incessantly pressed to separate himself entirely from the church and to be at the head of a small number who had left the communion. Motives were presented to him in every shape, especially in that most likely to affect a man of such ardent feelings. I am sure that it will gratify you much when you know that it was our visit alone which prevented this. But you will learn all this from himself.

---

* It would seem from the Memoirs of Mr. Haldane, that he at least, carefully avoided the discussion of church polity and ceremonies at Geneva.

I cannot but rejoice that Malan has not joined them. Although with his energy and eloquence and piety, things would at present have borne a very different aspect, yet we must doubt, whether with so many pastors decidedly orthodox in the church (there are five most avowedly so), this measure of dernier resort was necessary. If the question were, whether Malan should preach at all or not, it were easy to answer; but this interdict may be temporary. Some think it will be so; and the ground taken by its authors and defenders always goes on this supposition; and it does not extend beyond the limits of one Canton; so that Malan has within a few days been preaching at Berne and Neufchatel. To have joined in this separation would have been to shut himself out from all connexion with the Helvetic churches, and from a large and promising field of usefulness. Where there are such solemn interests at stake, I tremble while my advice is asked; and the preceding fact is the principal one which enables me to decide for myself, and to advise Malan to remain as he is, to see what change a little time may produce, and to take every proper occasion of spreading the Gospel in the neighbouring Cantons.

As to the Church of Geneva in particular there is a great deal to be said for, as well as against, breaking communion with it. To be obliged to acknowledge the ministrations of Arian pastors, who hold and exercise rights most contradictory to Christian principles and liberty, is deeply distressing. If patronage alone was thought a sufficient reason of separating in Scotland, what shall we say here, where an authority has been usurped by this "venerable company" of disregarding every wish of the people and of deciding everything according to clerical favouritism. The Professors teach Arianism; the Pastors preach it; the church has no confession of faith, and has ceased to require a signature even to Calvin's catechism. But on the other hand, some have not bowed the knee to Baal; yet a formal injunction not to be touch ("polemiquement" is their favourite qualification,) the fundamental doctrines of religion looks very like a profession of contrary principles; and in these circumstances scarcely any of the orthodox members of the "Company," either peep or mutter. If there had been a man here of Calvin's power to organize a separation of the precious from the vile, and shake off at once, with the heretics, those shackles which bind religion to the State; if the orthodox could have been closely united and brought to this, it had been a glorious result.

These affairs have excited vast attention on the continent and in Great Britain. The infidels here and elsewhere boast loudly of the dissentions; and the Catholics have taken it up with great vigour.

Malan is charged with want of prudence. But if he has erred, of which I am not sure, it has been from superabundance of zeal—a cause not likely to lead many of his compatriots into error, and the bad effects of which ought to be excused on account of its rarity.

I cannot but hope, after all, that the explosion will do good, and that the discussion which it will excite, especially in England (whose public sentiment has much more effect here than that of any other nation), will assist the efforts of those who remain faithful. But there is vast want of coöperation among the orthodox.

Mr. Drummund has expended a great deal of money on the continent in printing tracts, and bibles of which he published an edition at his own expense in Naples. He is at the expense of printing, 'Calvin's Institutes,' in the original French. He is devoted to the service of the truth, as he understands it.

My kind friend, remember me in those moments when you approach that point of Christian union—the throne of grace.

Ever with the most affectionate respect, your
M. BRUEN.

Extracts translated from the letter of Dr. Malan referred to above, here follow:—

TO THE REV. DR. MASON.

"DEAR AND RESPECTED FATHER AND FRIEND: May the sight of this letter give you as much joy, as your remembrance does each day to your good friends of Geneva! You have left in our hearts deep traces: your name lives among us: our dear children never pronounce it without respect and affection. Our dear Bruen has come to rejoice our souls; he finds himself at home, as in a family of his relations; but he is alone and it is not without a deep sigh that my wife and myself recall that a few months ago, it was with you, dear and good friend, that he visited our little dwelling.

"Already by the newspapers, and by some persons returned from England, we have been informed that you have delivered a discourse before the Bible Society, remarkable for the strength and the elevation of the thoughts: we learned also, though very indirectly that you made some sojourn in London, but I confess to you that we had some fears about your health; it seemed to us impossible that if you had been well you would have written us *nothing*. Bruen has informed us that you have published a letter to Travellers, which we shall yet have: he has also communicated to us your discourse and given many particulars concerning your real condition. We have passed through very difficult, very painful circumstances. It was then, that not once but daily, we desired your presence. For want of your words, we have recalled your principles, your counsels, your faith; the beautiful sentences that you have traced upon my memory, were for us a powerful aid. Yes, my dear and venerable friend, nothing is more certain than your remembrance and that of Bruen have guided me in critical moments, and I bless God, with my whole soul, for having restored this strong and efficient prop.

"The sermon that I preached some days before your arrival at Geneva, upon Justification by Faith (Bruen will bring it to you; it is printed), scandalized the good Genevese people, confident in their own righteousness and much irritated that a young man dared to put under his feet their celebrated charities, communions, &c., &c. You know that the 'Venerable Compagnié,' entirely surprised with the heresy which dared to revive the opinions of the obsolete Calvin, requested me not to preach that discourse again, and from that time regarded me as a dangerous sectary; so much the more that, instead of keeping myself behind the walls of China, I visited the English and American Christians, that we had the happiness of enjoying on the way. Our respected friend, Mr. Haldane, was particularly odious to them; and you, my good friend, yourself, were already a bugbear to them, when your too speedy departure left us only long regrets.

"The wicked temper of our opposers gains every day new strength; they dream in their wisdom to strike a great blow, and the end of April brought to light an agreement, by which the Pastors engaged not to preach *ex professo*, but only occasionally, and in passing, as also without being positive,—1st, upon the Divinity of Christ; 2d, upon Original Sin; 3d, upon Efficacious Grace; 4th, upon Predestination. There were at that time some candidates to consecrate. It was signified to them that they must submit themselves to this regulation. They bowed their heads with the exception of one, who declared that his conscience did not suffer him to do it; his consecration was therefore forbidden."

The remainder of Dr. Malan's letter narrates subsequent transactions in detail too minute for insertion here.

It may be interesting, however, to notice an incident which occurred at Dr. Malan's table, illustrating the intellectual training of his children. It is mentioned by Mr. Bruen in a letter to a friend in Scotland:—

"What do you think of my sitting down at table at my friend's house in Geneva, with his little son six years old, who not only knew the name of everthing he wanted *in Latin*, but could sustain a conversation in that language. Of this little boy it may amuse you to hear, that when Dr. Mason and myself had engaged to dine with his father, he was told, as something extraordinary, that two Americans were to be there. His first exclamation upon seeing us, was,—'*Americani! non sunt cum plumis.*' He had no other idea of Americans than what he had derived from prints, and therefore very naturally expected to see us in the feathers and fantastic garb of Indians."—(Memoirs of Mr. Bruen, p. 44.)

CHAPTER XXXVI.

1817.

IN ENGLAND.

Speech at the British and Foreign Bible Society—Letter from the Rev. Dr. J. Pye Smith—Dr. Chalmers—Letter to Mrs. Mason—Letter to Mrs. Mason—Letter to Miss E. P. Mason—Letter to Mr. Hardcastle—Parting Words—Letter from the Rev. M. Bruen—Letter from the Rev. J. M. Duncan.

EARLY in May Dr. Mason was enabled, at the anniversary of that noble institution, the British and Foreign Bible Society, to execute the commission with which on leaving home he had been entrusted by his own Board of Directors. The manner in which he performed his duty on that interesting occasion, received at the time unusual applause from the public on both sides of the Atlantic. The notice taken of it in the Christian Observer, in the July number of that year, is as follows:—

BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

In proceeding with our account of the last Anniversary Meeting of this Institution, we regret that we cannot give the whole of the very original and forcible speech of the Rev. Dr. Mason, Secretary to the American Bible Society. The following are the principal passages:—

"MY LORD AND GENTLEMEN:

"I felicitate myself this day upon the accomplishment of one of the dearest wishes of my heart—a wish, to the attainment of which I have adjusted my little plans and motions for the last five months—the happiness of being present at the Annual Meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society. I have to submit a motion, which I shall claim your lordship's indulgence to preface with a few remarks; not with the intention of informing this Society—that would be an attempt to enlighten the source of that light which has itself enlightened the world, on all points, connected with the circulation of the Scriptures ; nor with a view of exciting the zeal of the Society —*that* would be rebuked by its appearance to-day; but, as an humble organ of the American Bible Society, I would beg leave to express opinions and feelings which, though perfectly familiar to the minds of this company, are of some value on the principle of sympathy, as they are the views and feelings of millions of your fellow-men and fellow-Christians, who have the blood of a common ancestry running in their veins, and whose hearts beat in unison with your own, in regard to the objects of this great institution.

"The wise and the good, my lord, have long lamented the divisions and alienations which have severed those who hold the same 'precious faith,' and expect to meet in that place where there shall be no dissentions. But whether there was any remedy for this unhappiness, whether agreement in substantial principle could be made to supersede differences in subordinate matters, was a problem too mighty for them to solve, and left them only the feeble consolation of sighing after a blessing which they despaired of enjoying. But the problem which had thus excited the desires, appalled the resolution, and extinguished the hope of age after age, is solved at last : it is solved in this Institution.

"The Bible Society acts with an auspicious energy upon all, even the lowest classes of civil society. The man who reads and reverences his Bible, is not the man of violence and blood. He will not rise up from the study of those lessons which the Holy Ghost teaches, to commit a burglary. He will not travel with his Bible under his arm, and, meditating upon its contents, as forming the rule of his conduct, to celebrate the rites of licentiousness or inebriety. Assuredly it was not the Bible which, in 1780, kindled the flames of Newgate ; nor is it from the stores of inspired eloquence, that the apostles of mischief draw those doctrines and speeches which delude the understanding, and exasperate the passions of an ignorant and ill-judging multitude. If there are any two maxims which go together, under the sanction of Scriptural authority, they are these: he who 'fears God,' will 'honour the king;' and he who does both, will not be the first to 'meddle with them that are given to change.' On the contrary, the influence of the Bible, and, therefore, of Bible Societies, upon the habits of the community, is calculated to throw up around every paternal government, a rampart better than walls, and guns, and bayonets—a rampart of human hearts. While, at the same time, that influence over those who are in authority, descends, in its turn, upon the State at large; and, in the exercise of a wise and well-tempered rule, ramifies its genial virtue through all the branches of society. So that, if any thing can make a glorious sovereign, and happy subjects, it is the attachment and submission of both to the oracles of God.

"For the very same reasons, the Bible, in proportion as it is known and believed, must produce a *generally* good effect on the condition of the world. In forming the character of the individual and the nation, if cannot fail to mould also, in a greater or less degree, the conduct of political governments toward each other. It is not in the Bible, nor in the spirit which it infuses, that the pride which sacrifices hecatombs and nations of men to its lawless aggrandizement, either finds or seeks for its aliment; and had Europe been under the sway of the Book of God, this age had not seen a more than fabled monster of ambition endeavouring to plant one foot on the heights of Montmartre, and the other on the hills of Dover; and while he scowled on the prostrate Continent, stretching out his right hand to rifle the treasures of the East, and his left to crush the young glories of the West."

After pointing out the future prospects of the Society, and the promised consummation of the Gospel throughout the world, Dr. Mason continued:—"Permit me to add, that no heart is too magnanimous, no arm too powerful, no station too exalted, to lend its aid in promoting so magnificent a work. In that day, when all human things shall appear in their own littleness, and shall undergo a judgment according to truth, it will not be a source of shame or regret that princes have come down from their thrones, and that the members of kingly families and the possessors of ecclesiastical preëminence, have mingled with private Christians in common efforts for the best interests of individual and social man. The recollection of such deeds of goodness will never sully the purity of the mitre, or dim the star of royalty.

"The high and holy interests and responsibilities which are lodged in the hands of this institution, do not allow it to go back, or to hesitate. Its cause and interest are not the cause and interest of a few visionaries, inebriated by romantic projects. It is the cause of more than giant undertakings in regular and progressive execution. The decisive battle has been fought; opposition comes now too late. He who would arrest the march of Bible Societies, is attempting to stop the moral machinery of the world, and can look for nothing but to be crushed. The march must proceed. Those disiplined and formidable columns which, under the banner of the Divine Truth, are bearing down upon the territories of death, have one word of command from on high, and that word is, 'Onward!' The command does not fall useless on the ears of this Society. May it go 'onward,' continuing to be, and with increasing splendour, the astonishment of the world, as it is the most illustrious monument of British glory.

"A word more, my lord, and I shall have done. It relates to a topic on which I know not whether my emotions will allow me to express myself distinctly; it is the late unhappy difference between my own country and this—between the land of fathers and the land of their children. I cannot repress my congratulations to both, that the conflict was so short, and the reconciliation so prompt; and, I trust, not easily to be broken. Never again, my lord (it is a vow in which I have the concurrence of all noble spirits and all feeling hearts), never again may we see that humiliating spectacle of two nations to whom God has vouchsafed the enjoyment of rational liberty; two nations who are extensively engaged, according to their means, in enlarging the kingdom, in spreading the religion of the Lord Jesus—the kingdom of peace—the religion of love—those two nations occupied in the unholy work of shedding each other's blood! Never again may such a spectacle be exhibted to the eyes of afflicted Christianity! May their present concord, written not merely with pen and ink, but on the living tablets of the heart, enforced by the sentiment of a common origin, by common language, principles, habits, and hopes; and guaranteed by an all-gracious Providence, be uninterrupted! May they, and their Bible Societies, striving together with one heart and one soul to bring glory to God in the highest, and on earth to manifest good-will toward men, go on, increasing in their zeal, their efforts, and their success; and making stronger and stronger, by the sweet charities of the Gospel, the bands of their concord!"

A few days after, he received a gratifying evidence of the friendly regard in which he was held by one of the most distinguished and estimable Professors of his day:—

DR. J. PYE SMITH TO DR. M.

HACKNEY, May 20th, 1817.

MY DEAR SIR: It has added to my disappointment at being from home when you did me the honour of a call (and when, to our increased regret, Mrs. Smith was not aware of your name and person), before your continental tour, that since I have heard of your return to London, I have been frustrated in every attempt to be introduced to you. On Friday, I heard that you were gone, or going to Cambridge; and I wrote to a worthy friend there, begging him to find you out, and deliver a letter which I sent; but he replies that his search has been fruitless.

The more especial object of that letter was to urge a proposal which I hoped might be agreeable to you, as it would be peculiarly gratifying to a valued friend in my church, and to myself. That friend is Mr. Hale, whose name you may possibly know as the author of several works on the police and public morals of London. I am engaged to accompany him to Oxford on Saturday, the 24th instant, to stay till the following Wednesday. Our friends there have the *peculiar* command of every opportunity and facility for seeing to the best advantage, every object of attention in all the colleges and halls of the University. Now Mr. Hale joins me in EARNESTLY SOLICITING that he may have you also for his guest on this excursion. Probably you have already visited Oxford; but, even in that case, I hope that the special advantages with which we shall be favoured, will recompense you for another visit. You shall be guaranteed from importunities to preach, except such a service should be entirely agreeable to you. I trust that the ride would be relaxing to your mind, and beneficial to your health; and the enjoyment of your society will be to me and my friend a favour which we shall very highly prize.

If you are engaged to preach for Dr. Waugh, next Lord's day, that engagement, I seriously believe, ought to give way; and I venture to add my assurance that Dr. Waugh will be of the same opinion; for I know his kind heart too well to doubt it, provided you do him the same favour the Lord's day ensuing. Sufficient opportunity exists of notifying the arrangement.

Allow me again to press, as earnestly as I can, your compliance with Mr. Hale's invitation. That I am quite disinterested in doing so I cannot profess; for the extreme ill health of Mrs. Smith, characterized by the most remarkable variations and total uncertainty of being tolerable or the reverse—disables me from depending on having the opportunity of begging to see you at my own house.

I shall be to-morrow at the King's Head Tavern, in the Poultry, from nine o'clock in the morning to twelve; when I shall hope to receive a communication from you. If I do not, I shall try to call at Mr. Richie's, as I must be in town all day, since two of our students are to deliver their annual orations in the evening at Broad street; and as it is desirable to conclude the arrangement as soon as convenient, that the hour for calling for you on Saturday morning may be settled.

With sincere respect and attachment, I remain yours, in the service of our one Lord,

J. PYE SMITH.

During this visit to London, he renewed his intercourse with many leading Christians and philanthropists of various denominations whom he had met there before, and formed new acquaintances of great value. Among the latter was Dr. Chalmers, of whom he ever afterwards spoke with an admiration bordering on rapture. There is reason to believe that a similar feeling was abundantly reciprocated. Dr. Sprague, in his "Visits to European Celebrities," says—"Dr. Chalmers spoke of Dr. M. as possessing superlative talents; and said, that [in 1817, he heard him deliver a speech in London which was characterized by eloquence which he had rarely known surpassed."

In a letter to Mr. John Gibson, of Edinburgh, occasioned by the death of Dr. Mason, Dr. Chalmers remarks: "I had a great deal of intercourse with him in 1816 and 1817, and have still the most vivid recollection both of his great colloquial talents, and the general strength and soundness of his understanding. We were in London together in 1817, where I heard him at a public dinner give full proof of his masculine vigour, in a speech of very commanding eloquence."

Accounts of his health, and journeys from place to place, are given in letters to his family and friends:—

TO MRS. MASON.

London, June 6th 1817.

My Dearest: In the latter part of April, I wrote from Brussels, Antwerp, Amsterdam, and Leyden. I hope my letters have been received.

My tour through Holland has proved hurtful. The country deluged with water—damp exhalations on every side—chilly, drizzling rains—the whole climate most ungenial—involved me in a severe cold; then a smart fever of short duration; and finally threw me back almost to the point of ill health from which I had set out. The day I left Paris (April 5th), I felt well; but it seemed to be all nearly undone by three weeks in Holland. I hastened away as soon as possible, and have greatly recruited since returning to England.

It is my design, if the Lord will, to set out for the North about the 14th, so as to visit Oxford, Birmingham, Sheffield, Leeds, York, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Greenock, and be at Liverpool to take ship for New York, as early in July as I can. My calculation is to be with you in the month of August; probably toward the latter end; I am not anxious to encounter the severity of summer heats on first landing.

I am so hurried and distracted by incessant calls, that I cannot write to any one else by this conveyance. In a day or two I shall write to John and Euphemia. I am now going to my excellent friends, the Hardcastles; and expect to spend a considerable portion of next week at their delightful residence, four miles from London, Hatcham House. Were I a son, brother, or father, I could not experience more affectionate kindness from the several branches of that lovely family. A horse and gig are constantly at my command, and every thing that any one or all of them can do for me. I shall love their name, while I can love at all.

It will not be necessary to write to me again. The next communication will be, I trust, face to face. In that sweet hope, with salutations as usual, I am, my beloved,

Your affectionate,

J. M. MASON.

TO MRS. MASON.

Hatcham House, July 3, 1817.

My Dearest Nancy: You will, no doubt, be somewhat surprised on perceiving this letter to be dated from the seat of my invaluable friend, Mr. Hardcastle, in vicinity of London. I had expected, as I wrote you about three weeks ago by Mrs. Lamb, to have been now on my way from Scotland to Liverpool, if not actually there in readiness to embark for New York. The delay, you may be assured, is most unwelcome to me, as my usual composure abroad begins to yield to anxiety about my concerns at home. But it was unavoidable.

The moment my physician permits, I shall set off. I cannot of course determine when that will be. I do not suppose however that I shall be kept here after the middle of the month. In that event, I shall strive to take ship at Liverpool the first of August; and my friends must not look for me before the month of September. In the mean time it will gratify them to know that it is impossible for my situation to be more comfortable from my home than it is at this place. The scene is quite removed from London's labyrinths, and heats, and dust, and din. The scenery extremely beautiful. All nature is in her loveliest dress. The air perfumed by the breath of the Almighty upon "the fields he hath blessed." I have at my command a most charming saddle horse, and ride every day. This important item of the Doctor's recipe, I could not have enjoyed without staying a while here; and so the medicines would not have had fair play, and then the intellectual, moral, and religious banquet within doors! It is almost too much. But it has been and is my Heavenly Father's method to subdue my revolting, and recall my wandering heart, by the "*multitude* of His mercies." You cannot conceive the delicate, attentive, affectionate kindness, which I receive in this family. It should and shall be one of my last injunctions upon my children, to show, for my sake, should God ever put it into their power, the most grateful friendship to whosoever shall have the blood of the Hardcastles flowing in his veins.

Adieu. Your ever affectionate,

J. M. MASON.

TO MISS E. P. MASON.

HATCHAM HOUSE, July 4th, 1817.

MY DEAR EUPHEMIA: Your letter of the 26th April, from Baltimore, gave me great pleasure on account both of its general spirit and its interesting information. The progress of the American Bible Society, and of the Sunday schools, gladdens the hearts of multitudes in this country, whose meat and drink it seems indeed to be, to do the will of their Father who is in heaven. Their zeal, their vigilance, their labours, their munificence, astonish and humble me. The $40,000, and the eighty Bible Societies in eleven months, of which you speak, have considerably raised my spirits and thankfulness. My prayer and hope are, that he who hath so signally countenanced the beginning, will not withhold his blessing from the progress, and that the latter end will greatly increase. So much remains to be done, so many and such formidable obstacles to be surmounted, such extensive regions of the shadow of death to be enlightened, such vast expenditure of toil and treasure to be encountered, before the habitations of cruelty shall be visited with the word of life, that there is no room for supineness in any part of the Christian world; nor for a fear that exertions multiplied as far beyond those of the present day, as these exceed the exertions of the days that are past, will be more than equal to the magnitude of their objects, or leave without ample employment any portion of the stupendous means they shall furnish. Next to the eternal salvation of perishing men, one of the most exhilarating prospects held out by the coöperation of Christians from the four winds of heaven, n a cause worthy of their vocation, and in work fit for their hands, is the gradual preparation of the world for the reign of righteousness in the ages of peace. Accounts are pouring in here of the effects of diffusing the Scriptures through pagan and papal lands. The details you will gather from the report of the British and Foreign Bible Society. But I cannot refrain from mentioning one or two striking facts.

Two Catholic clergymen in Germany, by simply reading the Scriptures, to which their attention had been lately drawn, became completely convinced of their errors—without any human aid embraced the pure doctrines of the Gospel—and as they believed, so they spake: No more about merits, and masses, and saints' intercession, and the worship of the Virgin Mary, and other fooleries. Their mouths were filled with that which filled their hearts—Jesus Christ and him crucified. The result has been astonishing. The Holy Ghost sent down from heaven has accompanied their preaching. Thousands crowd the places where they minister—follow their steps—hang upon their lips, and receive the ingrafted word which is able to save their souls; while the temples of mummery and the priests of Mammon are deserted,—as Pliny complained of old, the heathen temples and their priests were abandoned for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus and the resurrection. There is also a venerable and aged ecclesiastic in the same country, who has in like manner embraced the precious faith once delivered to the Saints, and is most indefatigable in disseminating the word of God among his fellow Catholics. That word has free course and is glorified. The traders in the souls of men, are all aghast; the Jesuits, sworn veterans of the Apostasy, run to and fro, resisting, calumniating, sounding the tocsin of "Holy Roman Church." Cardinals assemble in conclave—they denounce the second Luther, as they term him, yet tremble before him. The Pope storms and anathematizes. His bulls bellow loud and long. But the good old man goes on unmoved and fearless. He has counted the cost; is ready to pour out his blood, if the

Master shall require it; and what is to frighten him? The Bible Society here, have done themselves the honour and the Gospel the service, to place in the hands of this Christian hero ten thousand dollars for the circulation of 50,000 copies of the New Testament; for no less a quantity will satisfy the demand. There is some wonderful event to follow. It seems to me as if the voice from heaven were now calling upon all the pious who may remain in the Antichristian church, for perhaps the last time, before the tempest of ruin descend from the Lord out of heaven—"Come out of her, my people." There may be another severance as at the Reformation; and then—my flesh trembleth because of his judgments—the vials of exterminating vengeance may be discharged in quick succession! Then for the hailstones and fire! Then for the earthquakes and famines, and pestilences, and for the sword of the Lord drunken with blood! Be silent, O all flesh, before his face; for he cometh, for he cometh, to make inquisition for blood!

' I had more to write, but my paper and my time have run out. Adieu, my daughter. Look unto the Lord in all things; and believe that you are very, very near the heart of your father,

J. M. MASON.

A very brief notice of what transpired after leaving London, is given by Mrs. Lundie:—

Dr. Mason overtook Mr. Bruen in the second week of September, when they spent a few days in Edinburgh together, during which time, they visited Professor Lesley, Francis Jeffrey, and Dr. Brewster, editor of the Edinburgh Encyclopedia. They had previously formed acquaintance with the Rev. Sir Henry Moncrieff, Dr. Chalmers, Dr. Hall, and most of the respectable clergymen of various denominations in the city. After passing a short time in those adieus which to hearts like theirs are always touching, they returned to Kelso, where they lingered together their last days in Scotland,—days fraught with spiritual improvement, and affecting, because they included the prayers and parting blessings of Dr. Mason, on the family whom he honoured with his regard."—(Memoirs of Rev. Mathias Bruen, p. 28.)

In a farewell letter to Mr. Hardcastle, from Liverpool, dated Sept. 29th, Dr. Mason remarks: "I have to be very thankful for the regular improvement of my health. Within the last eight days especially I am sensible of a favourable alteration. You will perceive that I have gained strength, if not discretion, since I left you, from my preaching last evening at 2000 or more Liverpoolians for an hour and twenty minutes, besides forty minutes of other services without any particular inconvenience.

"Wind and weather permitting, we sail to-morrow. The ship is fine. *She* is the *Minerva*, Capt. Sketchley; her commander skilful and courteous; the company desirable.

"In leaving England my mind is filled with a mixture of pleasing and of painful emotions. I can never forget the distinguished kindness which I have experienced, nor cease to regret that there is little probability of my paying another visit to this land of Christian enterprise and friendship. Among the dearest recollections of my life will be those which transport me to Hatcham House. I would say something if I could to convey anything like an expression of my feelings, but I am overpowered. The day approaches when there will be no more separations, and no more weaknesses."

Mr. Bruen was left in England, and a day or two before Dr. Mason embarked at Liverpool, he had the pleasure of receiving a parting note from his young friend:—

CAMBRIDGE, Sept. 27th, 1817.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND:—Though my spirits at Newcastle were not in a state easily to endure the form of saying farewell, yet I cannot forbear troubling you with a few lines before you leave the Island, to tell you how sincerely I now am and ever shall be grateful, that I have been permitted to enjoy so much of your society. It has been one of those occurrences in my life, upon which my heart, as well as my understanding, will ever dwell with delight. Since you have seen me so undisguisedly, I can only admire your forbearance in respect to the bad points of my character, and would turn this forbearance into a strong argument for their correction.

Farewell then, and may you be speedily carried back with renewed strength to the scene of your labours of faith and love and hope! and I would with all anxiety ask for such a share in your prayers, as you know the multitude and magnitude of the dangerous temptations through which I must pass, require. Especially your parting injunction at Edinburgh, would I obey: "to endure as seeing him who is invisible." If at any time you could spare me a few minutes to give me a word of counsel, or encouragement, or warning, I cannot express to you how gratefully it would be received. I bid adieu to one whose society has cheered me in many a dreary hour, when far removed from the possibility of Christian intercourse; to one whose instructions, if ever I should be honoured with the office of the ministry, have been invaluable; to such an one, saying adieu, I turn my face toward the multitudes of men with whom I can have but little community of feeling. But I will not fatigue your patience with the tedious expression of my feelings, and will only in so many words ask for your prayers and say farewell.

I came from Lincoln by Newark and Stamford to this place, where I arrived this evening. I expect to get into London on Monday. Do me the favour to remember me kindly to Ebenezer. I rejoice that he returns home with a heart as well as head so much improved, improved as we may hope by the best of all agencies.

With most sincere affectionate respects,
As ever, yours,
M. BRUEN.

Naturally sanguine, Dr. Mason returned home with more hope of restoration to robust health, than was felt by some of his friends. Mr. Duncan, in a letter of December 2, 1817, gives utterance to his anxieties on the subject, viewed in connexion with public interests of the first importance: "The enemy not only prowls on our borders and razes some feeble fortresses; but he seems to have gained our heights and to threaten our citadel itself. You know my allusions, and I can well conceive the feelings that, on your return, our sorrows would kindle in your bosom. Applying my principle, and judging of the mercies which yet remain, I turn my eye to you with no small share of agitated feeling. Your life is precious; and I think it the duty of every lover of our Zion to try and adopt some plan which shall secure your greater usefulness, without making any serious inroad upon your health. Your constitution when in full vigour could not sustain the heavy pressure of your numerous duties. And now when so much enfeebled, what are we naturally to expect? I have observed that preaching is exhausting. For years I have silently noticed its effects upon you; and I do seriously believe that you will now find it still more injurious. I have no less a plan in view than that you should give it up, excepting occasionally, for your own enjoyment and the good of the students. I should condemn my plan as idle and foolish, if I did not know that a greater sphere of usefulness is open to you. It seems to me as if you were warned off, to devote your attention exclusively to the Seminary. The state of your health is, to my view, a providential intimation, that you are no longer able to fill the double office of Pastor and Professor; and that you should devote yourself wholly to the latter."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

1818.

MISSION TO THE WESTERN CHURCHES. LETTERS.

Meeting of the Synod—Deputation to Kentucky—Letter to Mr. E. Mason, Edinburgh—Letter to Dr. Chalmers—Letter from Dr. Chalmers—Letter to Mr. Hardcastle—Letter to Mrs. H.—Letter from Dr. Waugh—Letter to Mrs. Mason—Letter from the Rev. John T. Pressley.

At the meeting of the General Synod, May, 1818, the Presbytery of New York reported:—

"It is with joy and gratitude, the Presbytery have it in their power to state, that Dr. Mason, who had gone to Europe for the benefit of his health, returned in November last, and has since been able to attend partially to his public duties."

The Superintendents reported the names of twenty-one students in the Seminary. They also reported, that, "the principal Professor, on account of the delicate state of his health, was able last winter, to lecture only on Systematic Theology; but the Superintendents cherish the hope, that his strength will be so far restored, as to enable him, during the next session, to attend to all the branches of instruction belonging to his department."

At the same meeting, Dr. Mason, Mr. Forest, and Mr. Dickey, were appointed a "Committee to revise the Book of Discipline, and the Appendices thereunto."

Difficulties of long standing existing in the Presbytery of Kentucky, which it seemed impossible to settle by ordinary modes of adjudication, the Synod thought it necessary to appoint a Special Commission for the purpose of effecting an adjustment.

On motion of Mr. Dickey, seconded by Mr. McFarland, it was resolved, that Dr. Mason, Messrs. Dickey and Lind, Ministers; and Messrs. Silas E. Weir, John Kennedy, and Jeremiah Morran, Elders, "be appointed Commissioners to repair to the bounds of the Synod of Scioto, and especially to the Presbytery of Kentucky, to take cognizance of the state of the churches under the care of said Synod, and in a particular manner of all the matters in dispute between the Rev. Adam Rankin and the Rev. Robert H. Bishop; to receive testimony and to perform all such things and acts relative thereto as may be necessary for a final decision thereon; which decision they are hereby empowered and directed to make; and to report their proceedings in the whole of the premises to this Synod at its next meeting."

It was also resolved that "any of the parties have the right to appeal from the said decision to the next meeting of this Synod; and that of this appeal they signify their intention in writing to the said Commissioners within two days."

His earnest application to the business of the Synod appears from an elaborate report on the affairs of the western churches. The Synod of Scioto had sent up a paper complaining about various transactions, and proposing either to fix the meetings of the General Synod at Pittsburgh, or to organize the churches of their denomination into three independent bodies. This paper was referred to a Committee, of which Dr. Mason was chairman. On the 28th May he presented a very able review of the whole subject, concluding with two resolutions adverse to the application. These resolutions were unanimously adopted. The whole report was of great interest at the time; but, covering ten closely printed pages of the minutes, is too long for insertion here.

TO MR. EBENEZER MASON, EDINBURGH.

New York, March 4, 1818.

My Dear Uncle: You have long ago learned from Ebenezer, our short and pleasant passage from Liverpool, and our safe arrival, with its circumstances, on the 1st November. I can scarcely believe the testimony of my own consciousness and memory, to the variety of places I have visited, objects I have observed, scenes I have witnessed, and feelings I have experienced, within the last eighteen months. I seem to have awaked out of a busy dream, and occasionally almost doubt whether I am not yet asleep. But it is all true. "The fashion of this world passeth away;" and that swiftly. However it may seem to linger when our eye is arrested by a succession of things new and distinct, it still urges on its course; and we go with it. Among the matters which sensibly touched me on my return, was the list of ravages, committed by death, in the circle of my acquaintance during my absence. About thirty have come to my knowledge (and the list is not yet complete) of persons whom I knew, many of them intimately, who were removed in the course of fifteen months. In this catalogue, I have to number the last of my mother's family, Aunt Varick. She died at Frankfort, Kentucky, on her way to Illinois, with her daughter, son-in-law, and son. We have the cheering consolation that she "has entered into rest." It is somewhat mysterious that in her old age she should travel eight hundred miles to die; and no little solace, that at so great a distance, she should find the only surviving daughter of her sister, and expire in her house. It was my sister Margaret, under whose roof she sickened, and who closed her eyes.

On my arrival home, I was agreeably surprised by the sight of a *grand-daughter*, of whose appearance, and of my own promotion to the venerable rank of the *grands*, I had not heard. I like it better, however, than a commission, even with a "grand cordon," in the "*Legion d'honneur*." Catharine is very well and very happy, enraptured with the *unparalleled* progress and excellence of the "finest child in the world," who already can stand alone with the help of a chair!!

Euphemia, who loses none of her superiority or interest, is shortly to be united to one of my pupils, a minister of the Dutch Church in this city. He bears the name of a famous reformer, John Knox; and were he a lineal descendant from that great man, would not shame his blood. The fire of the Scottish Elijah he has not; for he has not so many bad materials to burn up; but is much respected for his piety, good sense, sound doctrine, and calm intrepidity in the work of the Lord.

My own health is by no means confirmed. I preach twice every Sabbath, and meet my students only once a week, which however is equal to two sermons more. It has been too much. I took a ride of a month on horseback in January and February, and was in the saddle on our coldest day, when the thermometer was below zero. I am better for the exercise, and gain gradually, though troubled at times with difficulty of breathing. Shortly after I got home, a numbness seized my whole right arm, and especially my right hand. This hindered almost entirely the use of my pen, or I should have written sooner. It is greatly better; but the effort of writing the present letter gives to my fingers a sensation like the cramp. So I can only add the assurance of my love to the family, and of the unalterable affection of your

J. M. MASON.

DR. M. TO DR. CHALMERS.

NEW YORK, April 4, 1818.

REVEREND SIR: I have not ceased to regret my disappointment in being unable to cherish in Glasgow the acquaintance I had the happiness of forming with you in London. The commands of my physician detained me till the middle of August; and thus nearly the whole time I had allotted to excursions through the Island, passed away. It was September before I reached Edinburgh; and the very short notice given me of the time of the ship's departure from Liverpool, frustrated altogether my intended visit to your city, and other places in the west of Scotland.

It will give you pleasure to hear that correct principles on the subject of *poor-laws* and pauperism are gaining ground on this side of the Atlantic; and that the favourable impression is under no small obligation to your pen. A society was formed in this place about five weeks since, for the *prevention* of pauperism. Whatever auxiliaries it may employ, its chief reliance is upon the intellectual and moral cultivation of the poor. It has to encounter many difficulties, of which one of the most formidable is the continual stream which flows in upon our population from abroad. Of this Society, the bearer, Mr. John Griscom, is an active member. He belongs to the Society of Friends, and is a man of respectability, worth, and science. As he is anxious to be personally acquainted with you, I cheerfully comply with his request to put him in the way of enjoying that gratification, should he have an opportunity of paying his respects to you in Glasgow.

My health, though improved, is not confirmed. My public labours, although greatly abridged, are still equivalent to preaching four times a week. I find the pressure too heavy. It retards my recovery, and keeps me feeble. One half of it will be thrown off in a few days, when the Session of our Theological Seminary closes. It recommences on the first of November.

I pray you to remember me kindly to Dr. Balfour and our other friends; to present me particularly to Mrs. Chalmers; and to be assured of the high and affectionate esteem of your obedient and faithful

J. M. MASON.

DR. CHALMERS TO DR. M.

GLASGOW, June 20th, 1818.

MY DEAR SIR: The bearer is Mr. John Duncan, of this place; one who belongs to the religious society of the town; and deficient, I believe, neither in literature nor in piety. At his request I take the liberty of introducing him to your notice, and to any such attentions as you find it convenient to bestow.

It gave us both great pain and surprise, that we did not meet you previous to your departure from this country, and were also kept in a state of uncertainty about your health from the opposite rumours that we heard respecting it. I trust, my dear Sir, that you are now restored to vigour and to active usefulness. I can assure you that I look back with great pleasure on all the intercourse I was favoured with during your abode in this country, and count your acquaintance to be a great honour and acquisition to me.

There is almost nothing doing here. I think the most interesting publication that has come out of late, is a sermon by Hall, your friend, on the death of our Princess Charlotte. I shall ask Mr. Duncan to take it out with him, and present it to you.

May I crave an interest in your prayers. I trust I feel more of the exclusive importance of Christ Jesus, and my own absolute nothingness and worthlessness in the sight of God. I am quite sure that no acceptable grace can be formed in me, but through a channel by which a stream of influence might be made to pass from Christ's fulness into my empty and guilty, and depraved soul. O! that this humility were habitual, and that I got an habitual experience of that grace which God giveth to the humble!

You would oblige me much by a letter. I should like greatly to know how you are; and I entreat you to believe me, my dear Sir, yours affectionately,

THOMAS CHALMERS.

TO JOSEPH HARDCASTLE, Esq., LONDON.

New York, July 29th, 1818.

My Very Dear Friend: In a few days after my arrival home, a numbness invaded my right hand and proceeded up the arm to the shoulder, so as greatly to deaden the sensibility, and impair the action of the parts affected. My hand in particular was so enfeebled as to render writing extremely painful, and to bring a stiffening cramp upon the fingers. This lasted several weeks, and laid an almost perpetual embargo upon my pen.

The resumption of my public work on the Lord's day, and partially of my labours in the Seminary, produced no perceptible inconvenience for some time; but after that the symptoms of my complaint returned with considerable force. My health, in consequence, was but infirm during the winter. It has, however, wonderfully recruited within the last two months. I have borne up most unexpectedly under the unusual heats of our summer; have preached twice every Sabbath; and still get to the windward of the doctors.

To-morrow I set out, in virtue of an appointment by our General Synod, on a visit to our churches of the West, as far as Lexington, Kentucky, which will cost me a ride on horseback of not less than 1600 miles. I hope to have my health perfectly restored by the jaunt. Four or five brethren accompany me with a commission to inquire into, and rectify, some things which have gone sadly wrong in the West. You may perhaps be tempted to smile at the observation, that there is no preserving the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom among us, without a power controlling the aggregate concerns of His church, as one visible body. Whatever may be the case in your limited range and compact population—our churches here, without a greater social efficiency, than the isolated form of Independency admits, would all go to ruin.

Through the tender mercy of God, my flock increases, not only in numbers, but also I humbly trust, in the knowledge and experience of the truth.

Our American Bible Society goes on with progressive force. The clamours of the high-churchmen, serve the valuable purpose of keeping alive public attention, and of advertising the growth and strength and usefulness of the institution.

I was tenderly touched, my dear friend, to hear that it had pleased our Heavenly Father to visit you with a paralytic stroke. Well, there is no curse in it. It is still a *father's* hand. Infinite thanks to his grace: you are not compelled to seek your religion, when you need its *support!* "I have long known," said Romaine, "the doctrines of the Gospel to be *truths;* I now find them to be *comforts.*" So do all that love him. And so, my dear friend, shall you find it till the end. A little while, and a new shout shall be heard above; it will be *Salvation;* and then away to your Father and your God. My soul rejoices on your behalf.

TO MRS. HARDCASTLE.

New York, July 29th, 1818.

My Dear Madam: You have probably heard that I had a charming passage home. It was only twenty-three days. Though the sixth time of my crossing the Atlantic, it was no more memorable than the five former, for anything like what sailors call "a *gale* of wind." We had some pretty stiff "blows," and occasionally a rough sea; but to this day I have seen nothing which approaches the idea I have framed, of the *terrors* of the deep. Fifteen gentlemen made up the company of passengers; and not an angry, profane, or disobliging word interrupted our comfort. It was a great mercy, and I desire to be thankful for it.

Mrs. Mason and the family were all in health. The heavenly Keeper, into whose hands I had endeavoured to commit them, had accepted and guarded the precious trust. What do I not owe to his condescension!

On the 11th of May, my daughter Euphemia bade her adieu to "single blessedness." I have the happiness to see her, like her sister, joined to a partner who adorns the doctrine of God his Saviour. Mr. Knox occupies a distinguished place among the ministers of the Gospel in this city.

Shortly after their marriage, in a visit to his relations in Pennsylvania, they met with an adventure, which, but for the watchful providence of God, might have filled my house with mourning. They had to cross a small stream, called Willoughby's Run; a heavy fall of rain had swollen and discoloured the waters, but. Mr. Knox, being perfectly familiar with the road, drove his gig fearlessly along. The first thing that startled him was the disappearance of his horse; and the next instant the gig turned over, and precipitated them both into a hole five feet deep. Mr. Knox himself was completely submerged. Euphemia slid upright into the hole, and reached the bottom with her feet, standing in muddy water up to her chin. She lost nothing of her composure, and they were immediately disengaged, without receiving the slightest injury or taking a cold. It seems the neighbours had been digging stone, for a stone-*fence* (as we say) near the margin of the stream; and the quarry being overflowed, could not be seen on account of the muddiness of the water. How cheering the fact and the faith of a special Providence!

I should wish to write to all your family, but I have not time. They will not, however, erase my name from their list of friends. Tender them my affectionate regards.

TO DR. MASON.

SALISBURY PLACE, LONDON, July 25th, 1818.

MY DEAR BROTHER: The accounts we have received of the state of your health greatly distress us. You are very dear to the friends of the Redeemer in London. I am sure you are not forgotten by them at the throne of our gracious Father.

I visited the good and greatly afflicted Mr. Hardcastle lately.

He seemed to feel unhappy in not having heard from you. A letter would shed a reviving gleam over the evening of his day. Make the effort. He is gone with his family to East Bourne to try if the sea air will restore strength to his relaxed and greatly enfeebled frame.

The good young friend who carries this, will tell you how things are in London. Farewell my dear friend. Let us look upward and forward! Our best days are to come.

Truly and affectionately yours,
ALEXANDER WAUGH.

On his journey to the West in compliance with his Synodical appointment, he spent the first Sabbath at Pittsburgh, in the vicinity of which was found much of the dissatisfaction which had been expressed respecting intercommunion. The occasion proved an interesting one, and must have had a beneficial influence on the surrounding churches. A brief notice of it was taken in a hasty letter to

MRS. MASON.

PITTSBURGH, August 15th, 1818.

MY DEAR NANCY: Last evening, about six o'clock, brought our company to this place, "in good order and well conditioned." Through the good providence of God, I have not had a moment's sickness since I left home. The lime-stone water has proved very innocent; but the water of the mountains, containing both iron and magnesia, is somewhat mischievous. My lodgings are at Mr. Page's, whose family is in good health, excepting Mrs. Page, who took a cold and cough about six months ago, and retains it yet. I think it rather ominous. I was somewhat surprised to find pulmonary consumptions both frequent and rapid in these hilly regions.

Mr. McElroy is better, but feeble. He cannot, judging after the manner of men, be spared. He is undoubtedly at the head of clerical respectability in this place, and a large surrounding district. To morrow is his communion Sabbath. Seventy new members show the great increase of his flock.

On Monday we propose to set out between five and six o'clock in the morning, and to breakfast with Mr. Riddell ten miles off. It is doubtful whether we shall reach Chilicothe next week: it is two hundred and ten miles distant.

Though there have been some heavy falls of rain for a short time at intervals, we have uniformly escaped them; and have enjoyed upon the whole delightful weather and a pleasant journey thus far. My companions tell me that I have visibly improved since I left Philadelphia; and I am really encouraged to hope, that my jaunt may be the means of complete reëstablishment.

I cannot, of course, say anything more decisive than when I left home, about the time of returning. I have no news to add; and have only to repeat, what I trust, is not worth less for being old, that I am, as ever,

Your affectionate,
J. M. MASON.

TO MRS. MASON.

FRANKFORT, Sept. 5th, 1818.

MY DEAR NANCY: Your letter of the 13th Aug. directed to Pittsburgh, I found in this place on my arrival four days ago, I wrote from Greencastle. I also wrote from Pittsburgh; and last week from Lexington.

We left Pittsburgh on the morning of the 17th at half-past five o'clock. No accident of any sort hindered our accomplishing the weekly stages marked out at the commencement of our tour. We apprised the parties of our expectation of being on the ground on the 29th; and in readiness to enter on their business on the 31st. We accordingly entered Lexington on the evening of the 28th; and all was prepared on our part at the appointed time. Father R. could not be ready for some days; and Monday, the 7th inst., was fixed to commence our disagreeable investigation. Having thus nearly a week's respite, on Tuesday morning last, Mr. Lind and myself mounted our horses and rode over to Frankfort. Mr. Brown and sister were to have set out the next morning to meet me at Lexington.

Sister was extremely affected at first. So many and such mixed ideas and images rushed in upon her mind, as nearly to overcome her. Soon, however, she recruited, and assumed a degree of cheerfulness unusual with her. She has pined till she has grown thinner than before her marriage. Her vivacity has greatly subsided. Grief has impaired her strength and furrowed her face; so that she has the appearance of young old age. The loss of Euphemia four years ago, was a blow that felled her. She has never risen up in vigour since. Her mind however is calm and subdued. She is cheerful; but, through this exterior, you can see busy recollection working pain. I have not ventured upon an allusion to her affliction. Mr. B. himself even to this hour, is almost unmanned by it. Whether they will visit us this season or not, is yet undecided, though it is not improbable.

To give you an account of the country and towns through which I have passed, would be to indite a volume instead of a letter. The general face of Kentucky is extremely beautiful, the undulations of surface precisely what could be wished, for elegance, cleanliness, health and agriculture; the improvements, beyond my calculation; extensive farms cleared, and free from girdled trees, and even from stumps: vegetation luxuriant—crops abundant—the verdure deep; good houses; cultivation generally rude; the fences round the mansions, and other conveniences, coarse:—as is natural from the infancy of the settlements. The people are hospitable. They have no small degree of refinement at home, and none of that barbarian vulgarity abroad, of which we have heard much, and I anticipated some. They are very keen, sanguine and volatile; rather pugnacious on matters of opinion and party; and in this view, very impartial fighters about Lexington. Mr. M.'s fame has, I think, seen its zenith. His soar begins rather to quiver; and I should be nothing surprised, if he *winged* before the next frosts are out of the ground. I look for nothing else, but that, in the language of Tom Paine, as he has "gone up like a rocket, he will come down like a stick."

I am to preach to-morrow for Mr. Smith; Mr. Lind in the afternoon. On Monday we take the saddle early, to plunge into the muddy waters of Lexington.

I learned from Niffy that you were to leave home for Schenectady on the 25th August; and I address my letter accordingly. Tell the boys, that I expect them to be perfectly obedient to their preceptor; and that their exemplariness will add greatly to my happiness.

Your affectionate
J. M. MASON.

The nature of the business transacted by the Commission, and the mode of doing it, will in due time appear from the report made to the General Synod at their next meeting.

In the mean time, things of interest were interspersed with his correspondence. The first letter which follows, was from a former student, who had excited high hopes, and never disappointed them. His sphere of action has been a wide one, and no one, it is believed, questions the ability with which it has been occupied:—

TO DR. MASON.

ABBEVILLE, (S. C.) July 16, 1818.

REV. AND DEAR FATHER: Deprived of the invaluable privilege of sitting under the sound of your voice, and far separated from you, I consider it my duty to give you some information relative to the situation in which the Master has placed me. I feel ashamed that I have delayed so long to give this small testimonial of respect to one to whom I am under inexpressible obligations.

You have probably heard that I accepted the call of the church over which Dr. Clarke* was pastor at the time of his death. It is also the place of my nativity. In general, I believe, it is not best for a minister to settle among his kinsmen; but there are exceptions. I was invited to other places, where I might have calculated upon more temporal comfort; but several considerations induced me to decide in favour of this. It was the largest vacancy in the United States of which I had any knowledge. The congregation seemed perfectly unanimous and very pressing; and had, as I was informed, neglected other opportunities with a view to me. The number of youth in the congregation was very great; and the interests of evangelical truth called for a speedy settlement. The disadvantages of my situation, however, are numerous. Society is not very intelligent, nor refined. I am almost entirely cut off from intercourse with my brethren; am far from the centre of our church; and farthest from that section to which I feel most attached. Access to sources of information is very difficult, so that I have almost no knowledge of events which are taking place in either the ecclesiastical or political world.

---

* It is believed that this was the eccentric, but pious, Dr. Clarke, mentioned in our notice of Dr. Mason, Senior.

I have some trouble occasionally with *extremely good people*, who have great attachment to what they term the "good old way;" but which might as fitly be called "the *traditions of the elders*." There are three bones of contention, which have already been often picked, but yet are not likely to be laid aside till some of our fathers are removed to the land of silence, viz., Is it lawful to omit the observance of a fast preparatory to the Lord's Supper? Is it Scriptural to extend our Christian fellowship beyond the limits of our own church? Is it right to use any other than a literal version of David's Psalms in public praise to God?

When I inform you that it has been customary on Sacramental occasions, to hear those anathematized who would dare to believe the affirmative on either of these points, you will be prepared to understand somewhat of the spirit which we have to meet. A large portion of this congregation, however, have searched the Scriptures, and think rationally on these subjects. Some time in the spring of this year, I commenced an exposition of the epistle to the Ephesians, not with any intention to enter upon controversial points, but because that epistle abounds with rich Gospel truth, in the first place clearly established, and then applied to practice. I soon found that the principle of the church's unity occupies a conspicuous place in the doctrinal part. This admitted, the doctrine of Catholic communion seemed to be an irresistible consequence; and therefore I thought it my duty to utter it. Whether I shall remain long here at present, seems doubtful. I think my feeble labours are not altogether in vain, nor yet wholly unacceptable in this section of the church. Some of our brethren talk of a separation. I have endeavoured to remonstrate against it, and I believe not altogether in vain. I have urged them to send a representation to the General Synod, but to no purpose.

I am anxious to know the real state of your health, and the situation of the Seminary. It is uncertain whether I shall ever have the pleasure of seeing you in the body. For your kind attention while under your care, for your invaluable instruction, tender admonition and pious counsel, please to accept my unfeigned thanks ; and may God give you that reward which man cannot. Brothers Lowry and Strong are much respected, and there are not wanting pleasing evidences of success in their labours. May you ever enjoy much of the Master's presence !

J. T. PRESSLEY.

The Western Churches were still less likely to settle down in peace. The Rev. John McFarland, under date of November 2, 1818, wrote: "At the meeting of the Synod [of Scioto] we had much altercation on grievances—the old subjects—and some plans proposed. Mr. R. was very bitter and irritating; and a majority breathed the same spirit. They passed two acts: one, prohibiting the licensure and ordination of any who maintain and practice as you in the East do respecting psalmody and communion; and another, submitting to the Presbyteries of the Scioto Synod, the question of declaring themselves independent. I am of opinion that it will be done at the next meeting."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

1819.

WESTERN CHURCHES. THE SEMINARY. LETTERS.

Report of the Commission—Communication from the Professor—The Life of Hamilton—Letter from Dr. Chalmers—Letter to Mr. James H. Mason—Letter to Mr. Erskine Mason—Letter to Mr. Isaac Burrel—Letter to the Rev. J. Lind—Letter from the Rev. J. M. Duncan—Letter to Dr. Chalmers—Letter to the Rev. J. V. V.—Letter from Dr. C. Malan, Geneva.

At the meeting of the General Synod in May, 1819, the Commissioners appointed the year before to visit the Western Churches, presented their report, which (omitting the parts relating to a case which was dismissed) is as follows:—

The Commissioners appointed to visit the Synod of Scioto, and especially the Presbytery of Kentucky, &c., respectfully report:

That Dr. J. M. Mason, Rev. E. Dickey, Rev. J. Lind, and S. E. Weir, Esq., in obedience to the appointment of Synod, rendezvoused at Greencastle, in Pennsylvania, on their way to Kentucky, in the early part of August, 1818. Mr. J. Kennedy, one of their colleagues, was hindered by unavoidable circumstances from accompanying them, and they proceeded without him to the place of their destination. On their arrival at Pittsburgh, they transmitted by mail to Messrs. Rankin, and Bishop, notice of their approach, requesting them to be in readiness on the 29th August. They also advised the Hon. Jeremiah Morrow, their remaining colleague, of the time when they expected to be in Lexington.

This place they reached on the evening of Friday, the 28th August. Mr. Morrow was not there, nor did the other Commissioners hear anything from him till a late period. They were then informed, by a letter from himself, that he did not receive the proper notice in season, and that a severe fit of sickness had disqualified him for timely attendance, but that he was still ready to repair to Lexington, if his services could be of use. The Commissioners, considering the advanced stage of their progress, and the improbability of Mr. Morrow's being able to join them before they should conclude, did not think it advisable to subject him to the trouble of a journey; and directed their chairman to apprise him thereof.

On the 29th of August they entered upon the task assigned to them; and viewing Mr. Bishop as Mr. Rankin's accuser, ordered him to furnish them with a regular accusation, embracing the points on which he had published charges against Mr. Rankin.

This was done on the afternoon of the same day, with specifications, and references to witnesses.

The commissioners then directed that the said paper of accusation be put into the hands of Mr. Rankin, and adjourned.

On Monday thereafter, the 31st of August, the Commissioners appointed the Rev. Messrs. Dickey and Lind to wait upon Mr. Rankin and to inquire when he would be ready for trial. They reported from Mr. Rankin, that he would be ready that day eight days, viz., on Monday, the 7th of September, at three o'clock, P.M.; and the Commission adjourned to meet at that time in Zion Church.

They met accordingly, and their Commission from the General Synod was read by S. E. Weir, Esq., their Clerk. The Rev. Robert H. Bishop, and the Rev. Adam Rankin were then called. Mr. Bishop answered to his name. On behalf of Mr. Rankin, a paper was presented by the Rev. William Rainey, being a protest against the authority of the Commission; which after consideration, was set aside as irrelevant.

Mr. Rankin having appeared, the charges exhibited against him by Mr. Bishop were read to him by the Clerk; and being called upon to answer, pleaded, that he was not ready, and craved time until the next morning, to offer another paper which was in forwardness but not finished. His request was granted and the Commission adjourned.

At their meeting on the following day, Mr. Rankin presented to them a paper, repeating his protest against their authority, and purporting to be a declinature of all further connexion with the General Synod, as a body.

This declinature was unanimously decided to be unwarrantable; and the trial was ordered to proceed.

Mr. Bishop having been heard on Friday, the 11th, on the testimony in support of his charges against Mr. Rankin, was called upon to account for his own conduct in his mode of publishing those charges; and testimony was heard in his defence.

On Tuesday the whole trial was closed; and on Thursday morning the commission pronounced their judgment, which is annexed.

On the general circumstances of the churches, the commission regret that their time renders it impracticable to obtain such knowledge as might answer the expectation of the General Synod. They are enabled, however, to state, with considerable confidence, that the affairs of this church in Kentucky are low indeed; and that her future prospects must rest chiefly upon new acquisitions. They are compelled to attribute this result to the power of an improper feeling pervading the Presbytery of Kentucky; to keen litigation, created by personal and inferior matters; to the withering influence of a cold, formal, and proud profession, and the lamentable decline of personal and family religion. Yet the case is not hopeless; there is reason to believe that under an increase of faithful ministrations, her "wilderness would rejoice and blossom as the rose." The commission earnestly wish that it may be in the power of the General Synod to send out some efficient help, especially as that fine country, beautiful as "the garden of God," is desolated by various forms of error and fanaticism, which, speaking after the manner of man, could not stand before a ministry that rightly "divides the word of truth," and instead of wasting itself upon things which "minister questions, rather than godly edifying," knows how to reserve its strength and zeal for the substantial interests of the Redeemer's glory.

Their impressions with respect to Ohio and the western parts of Pennsylvania, are of a more encouraging sort. The face of the churches is fairer; the preaching of the Word more successful; personal and domestic godliness better maintained. They had the satisfaction to learn of Mr. Porter's congregation, that there is scarcely a family within his charge where the morning and evening sacrifice is not regularly offered. They specify this case, because it is the only one of which they happened to obtain precise and authentic information. Of other congregations their accounts were good, though less direct and ample.

Yet it is not to be disguised that much hurtful, and some intemperate disquisition, on the questions about psalmody and communion, have, in the Presbyteries of Ohio and Monongahela, soured and severed the minds of brethren who hold the common faith of our Lord Jesus Christ in its purity. The commission deplore that the conciliatory injunctions of this Synod, recommending forbearance in the premises, appear to have been very little regarded by either of the Presbyteries; and that public fame reports the adoption of measures on their part which do not well comport with their relations to this church.

The commission are of opinion that it would much conduce to harmony, efficiency, and the most precious spiritual interests of that section of the body, were a new Presbytery to be erected. The actual Presbytery of Monongahela is numerous, and spread over a great extent of country. From the Monongahela to Lake Erie, is a territory sufficiently large for the operations of one Presbytery. It has the advantage of a range of posts, in a number of country towns, which will become very speedily centres of new erections; several promising young vacancies, which require to be assiduously cherished; and will in all probability be soon lost without it, and the ministers who are already settled there, can combine their efforts much more comfortably than under the present organization.

The commission observe, throughout the whole of Pennsylvania and Ohio, in so far as traversed by them, an urgent anxiety to be supplied with ministrations by this Synod, a disposition to quietness which they hardly anticipated, and enough to convince them that nothing is necessary but moderation and prudence in their brethren of the ministry, to settle down the mass of our ecclesiastical population in gracious unity and peace. Let love, the fulfilling of the law, be duly cultivated, and the commission are cheered with the hope that "the work of the Lord will appear unto His servants, and His glory unto their children; that the beauty of Jehovah our God will be upon us; and that He will establish the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands will be established."

All which is respectfully submitted.

J. M. MASON, EBENEZER DICKEY, JOHN LIND, SILAS E. WEIR,	Commissoners.

Philadelphia, May 26, 1819.

To this report was annexed the judgment of the Commissioners. This judgment was drawn up at length with great clearness and ability, embracing not only the decision, but the reasons of it, and full answers to such objections as had been offered to the regularity and propriety of the Synod's appointment, as well as the procedure under it.

At the same meeting, Dr. Mason sent to the Synod a communication reiterating, confirming and perfecting views before expressed, and adapting them to present circumstances: It is evident that amidst declining health, he clung with parental fondness to the Seminary, and that with his last energies he laboured to raise and sustain the standard of preparation for the sacred office.

To the Moderator of the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Church.

Reverend Sir: The experience and observation of fourteen years embolden me to ask the attention of the General Synod to a few remarks on the subject of their Theological Seminary.

The faculties which the Christian ministry requires to be developed; the range of materials which it embraces; their various applications, and the readiness in which they ought always to be found for instant use; besides, the responsibility of an ambassador of God, present a vocation appalling to even a resolute spirit, and grievously mistaken by those who disparage the labours and acquisition preparatory to its efficient exercise.

The popular error on this head, and the tendency of things to fill the American churches with a flippant and barren ministry, have been perceived by the Synod, and stamped on the principal features of their plan of theological education.

It is very respectfully urged on the Synod not so far to yield to clamorous circumstances as in the slightest degree to relax their system, although it may not hitherto have been duly executed, but to rouse all their vigour in prosecuting the means necessary to insure its execution.

The work to be performed in their Seminary is too arduous for the professional talent hitherto employed; an acknowledgment made, not for the purpose of reducing the work, but of impressing upon our churches the importance of more workmen.

The following departments in the Seminary appear indispensable.

1. A department for the original Greek and Hebrew languages.

It is unnecessary to dwell on this point. Every minister of sense and reflection, whether he be well versed in them or not, feels it every day of his life. He feels that no man can trust himself as a safe expositor throughout, who is ignorant of them. A smattering knowledge is seldom better, and sometimes worse, than none at all. And it is much to be deplored, that the superficial character of education in the United States, sends youth to our Seminary for the most part uninitiated in the first principles of the Greek tongue. The consequence is, that their teacher must turn schoolmaster, and their own time spent in learning rudiments and words, when it ought to be employed in a critical investigation of the genius of the language itself. No method of meeting such a difficulty at the threshold has occurred, but that of a preliminary season for the exclusive study of the originals, before entering on the theological course.

This department, along with Scriptural antiquities, in so far as reference to them is necessary for illustrating its phraseology, needs one professor. But as there is little new in it after a man has once become versed in it, it is not incompatible with some other public engagement; and the expense will of course be less.

2. A department for Biblical literature, embracing separately the subjects treated of in the Bible.

Here is, in reality, the main field of instruction. Its richness, amplitude, variety, novelty (for what student of the Bible does not constantly find in it something new?), put into requisition all the talents, all the learning, all the skill, of the preceptor; and all the courage, curiosity, effort, patience, and perseverence, of the pupil. It keeps both at unintermitted labour. If properly conducted, the teacher has a task always to begin; for he must adapt himself to the different orders of minds, as they succeed each other, under his inspection. It is altogether unlike the process of mere lecturing, which it infinitely surpasses, and almost entirely excludes. From the pressure which it lays upon the instructor, it will never become fashionable; but it is the life blood of your system, and that which forms, and if duly kept up, is destined to form, its peculiar characteristic; of which the unassuming, but unutterable value, can only be gradually unfolded in your growing ministry.

This department requires the whole time and labour of one Professor; who ought to be entirely and liberally supported by the Seminary.

3. A department of systematic and polemic Theology. A much less difficult occupation than the other; although they ought to have a mutual understanding, and yield to each other, a mutual support. It may be easily connected with a congregational charge.

4. A department for composition and delivery of sermons. Here the discourses of the students are to be critically reviewed, with a special reference to the accuracy, simplicity, purity, and perspicuity of their style. They are to be trained to a just and natural mode of pulpit utterance; avoiding all affectation; all the artificial precepts of the schools, which tend to form rhetoricians, but not orators, especially Christian orators; all coarseness, clumsiness, and vulgarity. Here the students are to be drilled into that most difficult, but most invaluable accomplishment, although nearly neglected everywhere—*correct reading.* It is a public reproach upon the ministers of the gospel, that very few of them can read a chapter in the Bible with common propriety. The most barbarous pronunciation, blundering emphasis, and disgusting tones, perpetually assail every cultivated ear. It is not imagined that the greatest perfection in the art of reading, or speaking, can effect a spiritual change on the human heart; but it is a solemn duty, not to

exhibit the "Word of Life" in a form which something like the spirit of martyrdom is required to endure.

This department needs one professor; who, while the number of students is small, may, without injury to the institution, have another charge; but should it become considerable, will find his employment quite sufficient, from the multitude of its details.

These are views not hastily adopted; and, therefore, not lightly to be relinquished. The Synod will judge, how far the strength and capacity of one individual are equal to the exertions which they demand. As allusion to personal situation is unavoidable, I must say that I have felt myself overwhelmed by the utter disproportion between their magnitude and my own feebleness. Under the weight, particularly of the second department, my strength has given way; and left me with a shattered constitution. I regret no health impaired in the best of all services; the service in which it is my wish and hope to yield up my spirit. I regret that I have done, and am able to do so little; and that our little school of the prophets, which I have cherished with all my faculties and affections, must proceed for some time with languid steps. The Synod will distinctly understand that I do not pretend to encounter the whole of the labour which the just management of the institution calls for; nor even so much as I formerly attempted. The experiment has been decisive, and has demonstrated that I should only cut short a life probably but short at best. Nor can I undertake more than shall consist with the attentions due to my pastoral charge, which can be suspended no longer. They have contributed, and are willing to contribute largely to the public purse; nor would it be righteous, to convert their magnanimity into an instrument of suffering, which would not fail to react with a hurtful efficacy upon the Seminary itself. All I can promise, is to take the general superintendence; directing the students how to carry on their pursuits, and leaving the rest to God and their own fidelity to themselves; joining with this superintendence, instruction in the system of theology, and hearing their discourses.

At present I see nothing more to be done. It will, perhaps, be proper to turn our eyes immediately to the training up from among our own youth, one who may be equal to the first department, and there are not wanting materials in the Seminary which may very shortly be fitted up. In all events, the seminary must not stop or it dies; and its resurrection will be extremely improbable, as our church is likely to die with it. Most gladly would I welcome that day which should permit me to resign my place to younger and more healthy hands, and to see the whole arrangement such as we owe to the kingdom of God. It would help to gild my evening horizon, and conduce to the putting off my tabernacle with satisfaction and peace. The passing hour is the hour of action. The good Lord inspire, direct, and prosper it.

J. M. MASON

Philadelphia, May 28th, 1819.

The Synod by a formal vote expressed their cordial approbation of the view presented in the above paper, and their deep conviction of its importance. At the same time they authorized the Professor to employ such temporary assistance as the present exigencies and interests of the Seminary, in his judgment, required.

It may be remarked too in this place, that his impaired health had rendered it necessary for him to relinquish what he had regarded as a very responsible undertaking—the Life of General Hamilton. He would have done this with less regret if he could have forseen the faithfulness and ability with which it would be executed by another hand; nor would the further delay of more than thirty years for its completion have left him unreconciled, if he could have fully known what length of time was necessary for clearing away those thick mists of prejudice and misrepresentation which demagogues and party zealots had been able to throw over the memory of the illustrious dead. It would have soothed his griefs, if he could have anticipated what ample justice would at length be done to the character of his friend, as well as of his friend's assailants.

In the beginning of this year, among other communications, Dr. Mason received from Dr. Chalmers the following gratifying expression of regard, along with a volume of his writings:—

TO DR. MASON.

My Dear Sir: I beg your acceptance of the accompanying volume.

I saw Mr. James Scott of New York lately, from whom I learned that you were better, though not altogether in a confirmed state of health.

May you be spared for the continuance of those exertions by which you have done so much to maintain and promote the cause of evangelical truth in America!—and may it be long ere the large space which you now fill in the public eye become vacant by your departure to another and a better world.

Believe me, my very dear Sir,
Yours most truly,
THOMAS CHALMERS.

TO MR. JAMES H. MASON, AT SCHOOL IN SCHENECTADY.

NEW YORK, Feb. 10, 1819.

MY DEAR JAMES: You cannot well conceive the pleasure which your late letter gave me, unless you can enter into the feelings of a father toward a beloved son, of whom he has heard many good things, and hopes still more. I have feasted upon the cheering accounts which have been transmitted to me from time to time, of the diligent study, honourable standing, and exemplary behaviour of my boys, with infinitely greater relish than a literal feast could possibly afford; and I look forward to the day when I shall be able to present them to my friends and say, with all the exultation of a father's heart, "These are *my* sons." My only fear at present, my dear James, is, that in your great anxiety to excel, you may omit vigorous and regular bodily exercise. I wish you to be reasonably but exactly attentive to this point; or you may plant in your frame, before you know or suspect it, the seeds of long, cruel, and painful disorders. Too intense study is as hurtful as too little. Action of mind must be relieved by action of body; or the power of both will give way. Remember the case of that lovely youth, but intolerable student, *Kirk White.* You are growing; and your muscles must expand, and your whole constitution become consolidated by healthful exercise, or you will be an old man as soon as you are a young one. You will not understand me as recommending *idleness*—the very worst situation possible for both body and mind. Let both be active, but let not one lord it over the other

It would be very useful, my son, to employ your pen more in letter-writing. You do very well; but there is an ease and gracefulness in this sort of composition, which cannot be acquired but by frequent exercise. By this your brother Erskine has already acquired considerable skill. Tell him that I shall be glad to see a specimen of it in a letter to myself when he can find a private opportunity.

My own health is rather impaired since my return to my wonted duties. All the rest are well. In a couple of months, we remove to Mr Oothout's place, in Broadway, two miles from town. You will there have good country air and abundance of fruit. My love to Catharine, Mr. V. V., and Erskine.

Your affectionate father,

J. M. MASON.

TO MR. ERSKINE MASON, SCHENECTADY.

NEW YORK, March 17th, 1818.

MY DEAR ERSKINE: You cannot think how happy I have been made by the good accounts I have heard of you from time to time; of your steadiness; of your diligence; of your progress; and your correct behaviour. These things overpay all my anxiety about you. I grudge no pains, no expense within my reach for the education of my children, who thus prove to be my crown of glory, when I grow feeble, and must prepare to lay down my head. I do not mean to alarm you, by representing myself as in a dangerous way; but in the course of nature I must expect to be called hence before my children, and I have abundant admonition "how frail I am."

There is a little hint, my dear boy, in the close of your letter to your mother, received two days ago, which very sensibly touched my heart, and awakened all my solicitude for you. You speak of a revival of religion among the children, and of your endeavouring yourself to seek the Lord. Oh, should it be so indeed, that my beloved boy is in earnest about his immortal soul! Should he indeed have gone from home to find Jesus Christ and the life eternal! How blessed would this be! —how should my thankful heart pour forth praise to the God of my mercies! My youngest son, in the days of his early youth, safe for eternity!—what happiness like this? Yes, seek the Lord, my child, and he will be found of you. You have much to be forgiven, although you are so young. Spread it out before God; confess it without extenuation; aim particularly to be deeply and duly affected with the depravity and deceitfulness of your heart; and beg of God the free pardon of it all for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose blood cleanseth from all sin. Take care that your convictions of sin do not die away till you have found rest in the Redeemer. Take care that you be not satisfied with them. Conviction is not conversion. You *must be born again.* Take care that you do not mistake the moving of your affections for a saving change of heart. You have tender feelings, which are easily excited. But you must have something better to be a Christian. Meditate much on what you have learned. Reverently read your Bible, and pray over it. And the Lord bless you and mark you for his own! I say the same for James, who, I hope, does not forget to push that question—"What shall I do to be saved?" "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

When Mr. Barnes breaks up his school, you may both come home immediately. We are to move, and you may be of service.

Make my most respectful compliments to Mr. Barnes. I am greatly his debtor for his instructions to you and James. My love to your sister and brothers.

Your affectionate father,
J. M. MASON.

The mode of conducting an important part of public worship has often been a subject of inquiry, and is not likely very soon to lose its interest. A glance at it will be seen in the following communication:—

TO MR. ISAAC BURREL.

NEW YORK, January 13th, 1819.

SIR: In forbidding the introduction of a "chorus of singers" into any of our churches, I think our constitution contemplates a selection of singers to perform *alone* that part of God's worship which belongs to public praise; the mass of the congregation remaining mute, and being merely hearers. This sort of abuse has crept into many American churches, and is the thing, in my opinion, against which our constitution meant to guard. I do not see why eight or ten persons beginning the tune, and controlling it by their joint voices, so as to prevent the music from being marred, the congregation uniting with them when started, is more contrary to our rule than one or two. If we are to have any singing at all, it must be *begun*—but whether by one or two, or ten, appears to me indifferent; and, therefore, that such a proceeding as you describe is not prohibited. At the same time, it belongs to Christian kindness not to push our liberty at the expense of wounding even a weak or inaccurate conscience, nor to be contending about indifferent matters. Perhaps the *standing* of the commencing singers may alarm some serious people, who know that this is the *form* in churches which have admitted the justly offensive chorus above mentioned. Then let them sit down. Their voices will not be the less powerful, or the less harmonious. But whether they stand or sit, let them by all means be persons of serious and reverential deportment, and not thoughtless, giddy boys and girls, as is sometimes the case in other places. The worship of the "Great King" is too awful to be sported with. At any rate, if there is any important difference of sentiment on this point, let each side forbear the other in love, that the peace of the church be not endangered. That peace is worth all the "choruses" on earth. The devil is gratified, and the spirit of grace grieved, when Christians are set together by the ears for trifles. We have had too much jangling; let us have some peace.

Respectfully yours,

J. M. MASON.

TO THE REV. J. LIND.

NEW YORK, February 27th, 1819.

MY DEAR SIR: A letter from our common friend, Mr. J. Kennedy, gave me the first intimation of the affliction which the will of our Heavenly Father has lately called you to endure. The sympathy of earthly friends can go but a little way in staunching the bleeding heart. Yet it is not without its value; and I beg you to believe that you have it unfeignedly from all under this roof. But your great resource must be in that loving kindness which knows how to bind up the broken heart, and to heal a wound which the gentlest finger on earth can touch only to make you feel the smart. It is our unutterable privilege, my dear friend, to have at all times, and under the severest privations, access to the compassionate bosom of our God and Father. You need not now be told that he does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men; that he has reasons for his dealings with his own family, which, if revealed to them, would shut the lips of murmur and open those of thankfulness; and that he may and will cause even this sore bereavement, in all its touching circumstances, so to operate upon your personal and relative condition, as to make you own with gratitude and joy, that he hath done all things well.

You and I, my friend, are often called, in the discharge of our public duties, to speak peace to mourners. It is worth all the pain which our hearts feel when our turn of mourning comes, to try, in our own case, the value and the virtue of those consolations which we address to other Christians walking in the valley of the shadow of death. Oh, there is no voice so soothing as the voice of him, who comforts others, with the consolation wherewith he himself hath been comforted of God! We walk by faith. It is easy to believe for others; not so easy, yet not impracticable, to believe for ourselves. Dear friend, you know how to speak much and tenderly of the kindness of your Father in his dispensations toward your fellow believers; can you doubt for a moment of his kindness toward you?—of his kindness in removing the mother of your babes? Is *this* good? I know what flesh and blood will remonstrate; but what says your *faith?* ay, your *faith*, which can take the word of your God in opposition to all the remonstrances of flesh and blood? You do not sorrow as those who have no hope. *There* is a mighty relief. And why should not your soul here below hold communion with the soul of your dear wife above, in the joy of her escape from sin and grief? Be it so! It is blessed fellowship. Our faith can reach it. The Saviour sweeten your cup of bitterness!

Ever your's most affectionately,

J. M. MASON.

TO THE REV. DR. MASON.

BALTIMORE, March 8th, 1819.

MY DEAR UNCLE: I have received your letter by Mr. B., and am very much gratified.

The subject on which you said so little, and yet, in a few words, so much, the Seminary, so dear to the hearts of all who love Zion, is one on which I have thought a good deal. I am sorry, that while along with all other institutions which are dependent upon annual contributions, it must suffer under the pressure of the times—it is now more seriously affected. I had hoped that your health had been sufficiently established by your Western expedition to secure your services in a considerable degree. I feel much afflicted that it is not so. What will the issue be if you resign, as I infer from your expression you intend? And yet I think you right.

Still I hope that you will not resign absolutely. Cannot the institution be *suspended* for a season, in hope that your health may be restored by relaxation? And as you was so much benefited by your tour, might you not be induced to try it again for health alone? I have just heard that your visit last Summer did much good—altering the opinions, and removing the prejudices which people held with regard to yourself. Mr. McLanburg, from Chilicothe, has given us this information. The effect has been great; for you were a terrible being, when some Western people drew your portrait. I would not undertake to count your hours. Thus the current which so long set in against the Seminary, may be turning in its favour. I should hope so; and while any ground of hope remains, may we not strenuously occupy it? If you absolutely resign, the Seminary must stop; and all the disadvantages of the measure, I urge, would be felt, while its benefits would be lost. But I presume you have considered this plan yourself; and I would for this reason have hesitated to mention it, but that this information from Mr. McL. appeared to give it some merit of which you might not be aware.

Since Mr. B.'s return the sacrament of the Supper has been administered among us. Fourteen were added, which makes our number 317. There is a general and serious attention manifested among the people in hearing the Word. I have been lecturing for some time past on the Redeemer's Sermon on the Mount. I entered upon it with trembling, apprehending that it contained greater depth than I could fathom. I am glad, however, that I commenced. It has been more interesting to myself, and more instructive to my people, than any course of lectures that I have ever delivered. The plainness and simplicity of the truth which it contains, the point and novelty of the remarks to which it naturally leads, have attracted the attention of some, who, until now, were rarely found among us, and to whom we hope it may be blessed.

We have a little boy among us, six or seven years of age, a son of Mr. Palmer, whom I am watching with a great deal of interest, and with some trembling. His great accuracy in reciting the shorter Catechism, with proofs, and portions of the Scriptures; the number and aptness of his quotations from them; the conscientiousness which he evinces with regard to duty, both in respect of himself and others; his questions and method of asking them, showing that his mind is constantly employed on religious things; his efforts to instruct his brothers and sisters, and his father's servants, astonish me. It is so much like a work of grace on his heart, I ask myself, can it be any thing else? A short time ago his father was leaving home, and told him to read a chapter to his brothers and sisters every morning. Accordingly he regularly called them together, and the servants with them, and not only read a chapter, but made them all kneel down, while he read a prayer from "Jenk's Devotions." Before this, his father had heard him ask a blessing at dinner, when he thought no one near him but the children.

Your affectionate nephew,

JOHN M. DUNCAN.

TO DR. CHALMERS.

NEW YORK, March 9th, 1819.

REV. AND DEAR SIR: I have to thank you for your kind note by Mr. Duncan; and recently for another which I duly received, and, after due pains, and application of my critical acumen bestowed thereon, nearly decyphered them both. Here and there a word has baffled the united sagacity of the house;

and must, I fear, be left to the genius of some future Gruterus, or Montfaucon. However, I have succeeded in gathering your meaning, and shall always feel myself gratified in the opportunity, and repaid for the difficulty of diving into the mysteries of your sui-generis chirographs.

Some time ago I gave a letter of introduction to a respectable Quaker named Griscom, and explained the cause of my disappointment in not seeing my Glasgow friends before leaving Scotland. Lest my broad-brimmed acquaintance should not have seen you, I shall merely state that my physician in London detained me so long, that I was obliged to abandon almost the whole of my contemplated tour, and to leave Edinburgh at very short notice for Liverpool, where I arrived just in time for my ship.

During the last Summer and Autumn I was sent, with some of my brethren, on a Synodical Commission, to inspect the state of our churches in Ohio and Kentucky, and to decide some unhappy disputes which had grown beyond the reach of the local church authority. The tour was performed on horseback; and cost me a ride of 1750 miles. My quadruped doctor did more for me than all the bipeds of the faculty; and I returned free from my evil symptoms, and in better health than I had known for several years. But although near a cure, I was not cured. The resumption of my professional labours, especially with my students of Theology, revived my complaint, and has thrown me quite back. It is now settled that I must either relinquish this last employment, (unutterably more momentous in my view than any congregational services), or prepare to fall a speedy sacrifice to its duties.

Just as I was penning the foregoing sentence, my son-in-law, the Rev. John Knox, entered my chamber to announce the sudden death of Mr. John E. Caldwell, agent for the American Bible Society. He was a good and active man; an intelligent Elder of brother Romeyn's church; and of extensive usefulness in our benevolent institutions. He is gone, I trust, to the light ineffable, where even the illumination of the Bible shall be eclipsed.

And you too, my dear friend, have lost the treasurer of that truth and grace which God had committed to the venerable Dr. Balfour. I feel bereaved, but how much sorer must be your bereavement! A star of the first magnitude has disappeared from the firmament of the Scottish Church; but then it is only to shine with divine lustre in a higher firmament. O! shall we be ready to take the same flight from this earthly to that heavenly sphere? I cannot tell you how such a question weighs down my sinful heart. Were not our Lord's righteousness perfect, His grace exceedingly abundant, and His spirit the Living One, I should lie down in despair, and die the death of the undone. Pray for me, that I may be filled with the fulness of the Saviour, and be enabled to honour His name, tasting as well as showing forth His salvation.

I had much more to write; but must desist. After my best regards to Mrs. Chalmers, I can only add that I am in great truth,

Yours affectionately,
J. M. MASON.

TO THE REV. J. V. V., SCHENECTADY.

NEW YORK, March 17th, 1819.

MY DEAR SIR: I am soothed by the news of your ministerial success. The Lord does not leave himself without a witness. And if transgressors be turned from the error of their way into the light of His salvation, the instruments of their conversion are infinitely overpaid for their labours and their mortifications too. There has been a little sprinkling on our fleece in Murray Street. At our last communion we had an addition of eighteen. A letter from J. M. Duncan informs me of fourteen added to his church, and an increased attention to divine things in his flock. Yours too, I understand, are roused, especially the younger part. May the commotion increase, till the last bone shall cleave to its fellow, and there shall stand up upon their feet an exceeding great army, the work of the QUICKENER, his conquest from death. "Blessed and holy is he who hath part in the first resurrection!" Let us be diligent and thankful and humble. Grace cannot be proud, or vain; but both vanity and pride, if not watched and crucified, will continue to elevate themselves by the doings of grace itself—even the grace of the Most High. Be this our motto—"Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." *He* does all that is worth the doing. To him be all the praise for the past; and all our seeking for the future.

Your little girl has been restored to you. She has now been twice given by our Heavenly Father. Hold her as *his*, to be surrendered whenever he shall call for her. Remember for yourself, and tell my dear Catharine, that we must have no idols; or the Lord will break them. The loveliest only child that ever was fashioned by his hand, must not be his competitor in the heart. May he graciously keep *everything* from interfering between us and him! All goes right, when he alone is on the throne. His love rejoice you, and bless my daughter!

Very affectionately,
J. M. MASON.

The following letter alludes to events at Geneva, of which we have already seen the commencement, and which at the time of them, made a deep sensation throughout the Christian world. They were connected with doctrines which Dr. Mason not only considered vital, but which he had long regarded with peculiar sensibility. He moreover loved the sufferer as a personal friend, with whom he had enjoyed, at Geneva, a great deal of Christian communion, to the no small edification and comfort of both. The letter was written in French, and translated for our present use. This will account for some of its idiomatic phrases:—

FROM DR. MALAN, OF GENEVA, TO DR. M.

HAVRE DE GRACE, April 22, 1819.

MY GOOD AND RESPECTED FRIEND: What events at Geneva since your departure! How mightily does the Lord work! What vigorous and sustained wrestling! Heresy must tremble. The idol has feet of clay; we will strike them and it will crumble, to the shame of those who have adored it. Already it has received a mortal blow. I have been suspended and afterward deposed by it, because of the name of him who was dead, but lives forever and ever. God be praised! and let all the children of God say Amen! There is a holy people at Geneva. He who has the key of David—who opens, and no man can shut—has opened a door before us. We have only a little strength: but he has permitted us to confess his name, and to keep the word of his patience. He also will keep us in the hour of temptation. Oh, how excellent,—how sweet and dear to my heart,—is this reproach of Christ with which I have been covered! Yes, I am a Christian, and I will die a thousand times with joy, to publish it in the face of all the children of Arius and Socinus. But alas, they are taken captive by the destroyer! Let us pity them, and, by kind warning, endeavour to make them return unto him who has the words of eternal life. You have often said to me, my good friend—you have written it to me in remembrance—that "we need fear nothing under the guidance of Christ." That is true: yes, most true. What faithfulness—what tenderness, in our kind Saviour! I remember to have seen your tears flow in speaking of that best of masters. At that time I did not understand these sentiments as I do now. I had then not yet learned in the happy school of tribulation, that "it is good to be afflicted;" and that, under the cross of Christ, we find the flowers of hope, and taste the blessedness of being his servants. I have often said, but I cannot grow tired of repeating it, that I could not wish that our Heavenly Father had spared me one of the trials through which it has pleased him to make me pass, if I should by this exemption be deprived of the graces which he has attached to them. Let us, dear Doctor, go on boldly and sincerely. See, life is so short, so little a thing, it will soon be ended. We shall then see Christ. Yes, we ourselves shall then see him whom we love and follow without seeing. Oh, what servant could be so unworthy, so obstinate, as to hesitate and calculate with himself? No, my brother, we will not do it; and if it please God, we will go into the thickest of the fight, to cry—"Honour and Glory to the Nazarine—to the Crucified!" We will carry farther the standard of the Lamb, and we will rally our brethren around us. If our blood be shed, what does it matter? Has that of our Master been spared?

Blessed be that good Being who has called me, and established me at Geneva! Bruen, my brother—my intimate and good friend—whom I have the joy of seeing before me, in writing these lines—Bruen who has been an instrument of God's goodness toward me, and who leaves me after seeing his labours honoured with success,—will recount to you many details, which will prove to you more plainly what we have said at Geneva—that he who walks by faith, walks in the light. Adieu! May the grace of Christ be with you eternally!

Your friend and brother,

C. Malan.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

1820—1829.

THE EVENING OF HIS DAYS.

Increasing Infirmities—Proposes Rev. J. M. Duncan for his Colleague—Answer of the latter—Letter to Dr. Chalmers—Letter to Mrs. Catharine Van Vechten—Invited to the Presidency of Dickinson College—Removes to Carlisle—An Accident—Death of Mrs. Van Vechten—Death of his son James—Revival of Religion in the College—Letter from Mr. William Montgomery—Letter from Joseph Nourse, Esq.—Resigns the Presidency—Letter from a Committee of the Trustees—Answer—Returns to New York—Letter to the Rev. J. V. V.—Last Public Service—The Closing Scene.

From the communication addressed to the General Synod, at their last meeting, by Dr. Mason, it was evident that he considered his energies deeply undermined, and that the relief obtained at times by relaxation and travel, was but temporary. In the Autumn of that year, his symptoms became still more discouraging. He was in two instances visited with paralytic affection, which awakened in the minds of his friends lively apprehensions. Though after a cessation of his labours for a time, he was able to resume them, it was with abated vgiour. In the month of February, 1820, an incident occurred in his pulpit which seemed of decisive portent. Having finished the preliminary exercises of the occasion, as his manner was, he entered upon the exposition of the portion of Scripture which he had read, when all at once, his memory failed, and he was unable to proceed. Bursting into tears, he told the people what had happened, and that he must yield to the infirmity. He then offered up a short prayer, gave out three verses of the fifty-sixth Psalm, and dismissed the congregation.[*] It could now no longer be doubted that his strength was unequal to his burdens. His flock resolved at once to lighten his labours, by procuring, if possible, an assistant, and leave to him only such services as he might find it convenient to render. On an intimation of this, he proposed to them "to call the Rev. John M. Duncan, of Baltimore, whose talents," he said, in a communication to his Session and Trustees, "you know, in whose integrity and prudence I have unbounded confidence, and who, if he can be obtained, bids fair to accomplish all that you can wish. I am sensible that nothing but his greater usefulness in the churches could justify the attempt to remove him; yet I believe that our brethren of Baltimore themselves could hardly hesitate in conceding that higher interests are at stake among us than among them. In the prosecution of this design, should it meet your approbation, and that of the congregation, I shall lend you all the assistance in my power."

---

[*] It is remarkable that at nearly the same age, a similar visitation befell Dr. Mason's father. Dr. John Gosman says: "On that occasion he had selected, as the subject of his discourse, Luke ix. 31: *Who appeared in glory, and spake of the decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.* He had proceeded consider-

These things led to a correspondence of which part must be given:—

TO THE REV. DR. MASON.

BALTIMORE, April 1, 1820.

MY DEAR UNCLE: Your kind letter has been received. Its principal subject is one on which I have thought more than once. This, however, I would not readily confess, if it had originated with myself. I have been accustomed to hints and reports springing up in various quarters, though I supposed you were utterly ignorant of them; and I do not believe that any plan now either commencing or ripening can exceed in length or breadth the hints I have received. My friends have expressed opinions which I never have had vanity enough to make my own; or if I had, I should be deficient in spirit and

---

ably in the discussion of the text, when he suddenly stopped. His recollection had failed; he made several efforts to recall his train of thought, but in vain. He stated that he had never presumed to serve his Master with what had cost him nought, and that he could not accuse himself of neglect in preparing himself for the occasion. The Providence, he said, was mysterious, and was one of those events which, though not understood now, he would understand hereafter. The Rev. John Dunlap, of Cambridge, preached in the afternoon, and in introducing the service, observed that he entered the pulpit with fear and trembling, when he reflected on the occurrence of the morning, and said, "*If these things are done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?*"

strength ever to justify them. I mention these things merely to account for any familiarity my mind may have with the subject. During the month of December last, a report was brought on from New York, and most sedulously circulated here, that in consequence of your ill health, my removal from this place was contemplated, and would shortly take place. It was believed by a great many; applicants were deterred from taking seats in our house of worship; the revenue was injured; the trustees were alarmed; and I was obliged, both publicly and privately, to state that the report was unfounded, and that I had no intention of removing. In private, I was even more explicit—stating that I felt myself in the very situation which Providence had designed for me, where He had made me useful, had surrounded me by the seals of my own ministry; had even introduced some of them into the Session; had given me an influence in this city which even my enemies felt; and that I had seen the Master's displeasure follow those who forsook a situation so strongly marked. Such things I have unhesitatingly said, because they were then precisely my opinions, and they still are so.

But familiar as I was thus forced to be with this subject, and though my opinions were neither hastily nor rashly formed, yet your letter agitated me deeply. I was almost sorry that I had gone to New York. I did not suppose that my visit would have resulted thus. I had hoped that the congregation of Murray Street were apprized of what I had publicly done. I really went on with the pure intention of seeing *you*. Nothing else could have taken me from home. My heart hangs so much upon you, that I could not be satisfied without seeing you. But could I have suspected an issue so important to your feelings and mine, I believe I should have felt myself in duty bound to remain at home.

I fully appreciate, my dear Uncle, the comfort and advantages I should have in such a connexion with you, as long as it should please Divine Providence to preserve us together, and as long as I could hold your esteem for whatever talents I may have, as well as your warm affection for me as your nephew. I know the general advantages of New York above Baltimore in a religious point of view. But when I look round upon this desolate place, and remember what of its general interests have been connected with my ministry, how can I forsake it? When I view the many children "whom the Lord hath given me," how can I leave them?

I know you can appreciate all these circumstances. Though not hasty in my opinions, I am willing to hear whatever can be said to alter them, and shall wait your visit. I write immediately, because I am satisfied you did not know that I had committed myself, and because by knowing my precise views, you might prevent the call from going too far. I wish Murray Street well; and thought until yesterday that they had another object, and felt pleased that you and I would have been spared the feelings we shall now have to suffer.

With the warmest regard,
Your affectionate nephew,
JOHN M. DUNCAN.

Some time after this, having derived no substantial benefit from the remedies employed, he came to the conclusion that he must relinquish preaching, and ask to be released from his charge. This purpose with its reasons he committed to paper, intending after a more mature deliberation, to communicate it to his people. "The cause, indeed," he tells them, "is my infirmity, not, I trust, my fault. The holy hand of God lies upon me, and through me upon you. His dispensations are all wise and just and good; nor is it for us to repine at them. But the use of proper means to mitigate or remove our afflictions, is not repining. So far as depends upon me, I cannot consent that yours should be any longer protracted. I know well your patience and kindness. I have had many expressions of them; and latterly, your sympathizing endurance of my mutilated services on the Lord's day; your willingness and even eagerness rather to shut up your sanctuary, than run any hazard of oppressing me, comes home to my heart with an appeal which is very sensibly felt, and will, I hope, be long most gratefully remembered. But, my dear friends, this very kindness of yours, while it draws closer all the cords of affection, stimulates me to attempt your relief. Time enough has been employed upon an experiment to render any further expectations of advantage from its issue either comfortable or reasonable. Under these circumstances, I think it my duty, in correspondence with the best medical opinion, to retire from the pulpit. My design therefore, my dear friends, is to demit my pastoral charge into the hands of the Presbytery at their approaching meeting. The measure is indeed like tearing the flesh from my bones; but it is all that is left for me to do."

Though at this period the manual labour of writing was to him in no small degree irksome, yet an ocsasional letter to his friends gave utterance to his thoughts and feelings respecting them. Only two of them will be here given :—

TO DR. CHALMERS.

New York, April 9th, 1821.

Reverend and Dear Sir: I have not hitherto told you how much I was refreshed and admonished, prompted and edified, by the volume of sermons preached in the Tron church at Glasgow, which you did me the favour to send me. You are still going on, I see, in the same glorious career, bringing the truths and principles of Christianity to bear upon the conduct of common life. May your course be as long continued as it has hitherto been distinguished. I cannot requite you by an exchange; but I do something towards gratifying your social disposition, by recommending the bearer, Mr. J. Q. J., to your kind regards. I trust you will never remember them with regret. Mr. J. carries with him a treasure, which, though not omnipotent on 'Change, you know how to appreciate: he is rich in character.

I am, my dear Sir,
Your affectionate friend,
J. M. MASON.

TO MRS. CATHARINE V. V., SCHENECTADY.

New York, August 8th, 1821.

My Dear Daughter: We have just received Jacob's two letters concerning your little daughter. She was removed before I had the satisfaction of seeing her. You, my dear, have hitherto been the child of indulgence. Your Heavenly Father added comfort to comfort. He commanded you to sing continually of *mercy*. He has now sent *judgment*, and his blessed will is that you sing of *that* too. It is well observed by Jacob, that we do not know what blessings are in the cup. No; we do not know; but as Christians we can *trust*. Walk by faith in this step so dark, and so painful to flesh and blood. All shall be revealed in due season. In the mean time hold fast the firm assurance—"Yea, the Lord will give that which is *good*." Believe it though your heart tremble. Believe it though your eyes overflow with tears. Remember *who* has said "The cup which my Father giveth, shall I not drink it?" Oh, he drank it, and turned all our cups into cups of salvation. Whatever the Lord may do with others, He has made it the privilege of His people to believe for the eternal life of their children. Now comes the *kernel* of that promise—"I will be *thy* God, and the God of thy *seed*." It is enough. "Bless the Lord, O my soul!"

You have your mother's and your sister's sympathy. I am commissioned to say so. You know you have it from the inmost heart of your affectionate father,

J. M. MASON.

Before the time fixed for resigning his charge, Dr. Mason received an invitation to become President of Dickinson College, at Carlisle. Overtures of a similar nature from other institutions had been made to him at different times before; but to none of them (except that from Columbia College), had he given any encouragement. To the present however he immediately replied that he felt favourably inclined. "It will employ me usefully," he said, "in a work to which I find myself adequate, but which will not oppress me." It was accordingly accepted; and in December, 1821, he removed to Carlisle. The College, which had for several years been entirely suspended, was revived, students in very encouraging numbers flocked in from various parts of the country, besides those which accompanied him from New York; and assisted as he was by the able faculty whom he had selected, he had the prospect of spending the remnant of his days at the head of a prosperous institution. After some months of successful labour, however, his sky was again overspread with clouds by an accident that crippled him for life. By a severe fall he fractured the neck of his thigh bone. This laid him up for a long time, and subjected him to much suffering, which doubtless aggravated those effects of his former disease from which he had not yet recovered.

Afflictions from other sources also awaited him. He had always been remarkably favoured with regard to the health and prospects of his children. He has been heard to say, "It has pleased my Divine Master to send me various trials, but he has spared me in my domestic relations. He knows that is a quarter in which I could not sustain them." At length, however, he was afflicted in this quarter also; and sustained beyond his anticipation. During a visit to New York, in August, 1822, he was met by the heavy tidings of the death of a beloved child, Mrs. Van Vechten, residing at Schenectady. The stroke was to him sudden and overwhelming. And though she had departed in the fullness of Gospel hope, his soul was bowed down, and wrung with anguish. His utterances of grief on the occasion were singularly striking, and proceeded from the very innermost depths of a wounded spirit. As they were not noted down at the time, the traces of them, after more than thirty years, are too imperfect to be now recorded. The only written memorial of his feelings, is a letter of condolence, which he wrote with difficulty to his son-in-law:—

TO THE REV. J. V. V., SCHENECTADY.

NEW YORK, August 9, 1822.

MY DEAR SIR: Need I tell you that I sympathise with you? The heart of a father over his daughter responds to every moan of a husband's heart for his beloved wife. Yes, my dear Sir, she is removed from both of us! But though nature grieves, grace will triumph. The eye of faith never shines with more lustre than when it is seen through nature's sorrows. But what shall we say? It is the Lord; and shall he not do what he will with his *own?* Oh, she *was* his own past all peradventure! *manifestly* his own! The proof, as you know better than any other human being, was written, "not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not on tables of stone, but on the fleshly tables of the heart." If a repining or discontented thought stir in my heart, I am instantly rebuked by that prayer of our great High Priest, "Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me, be *with me, where I am*, to behold my glory." The Lord Jesus was praying, that our dear Catharine should be with him. He was heard! Would you wish that your Lord should be refused *any* request? He knew that it would fill our hearts with anguish and our eyes with tears; yet he prayed for it. Now then we have strong claim upon his love. If any earthly event would try the quality of your religion, this will do it. O Jacob, my son, we have so much cause for thankfulness and praise, that nature's voice is almost stifled. I adore my gracious God that I had *such* a daughter to yield to his call. Do you not adore him that you had *such* a wife to give up? Our sweet Catharine is with the Resurrection and the Life. Are you sorry for that? Her conflict is over; her race is run; no more trouble now from sin or pain. Are you sorry for that? Dear Lord Jesus our hearts bow; they kiss the rod because it is *thine.* In their desolation, they seek that repose and comfort which thou only canst bestow! May he, the Lord Jesus Christ himself, comfort and support you by his spirit of consolation; and enable you to say, "He hath done all things well. He hath fulfilled his word unto his servant to give that which is good." For it stands upon eternal record, and rejoice in it, O! son of grief, that "all things shall work together for good to them that love God."

Your mother is much bowed down, but she bows like a Christian. Oh, how she loved your Catharine! She is the bearer of this letter. Her heart yearns over your motherless babes. Sooth her spirit by permitting one of them to accompany her home. I wished to have seen you myself, but my broken thigh bone could hardly stand the jolting of the stage. The paralytic affection still lurks about my frame; and I dreaded the effect of violent agitation of mind. I submit to necessity and stay behind. Now the God of peace comfort, settle, strengthen, stablish you! Make your ministry more humble, tender, and successful!—Enable you to walk more closely after your Lord!—Call your name "Barnabas, a son of consolation," from your abundantly comforting others with the consolation wherewith your own soul has been comforted of God.

Yours in the bonds of nature, grace, and affection,

J. M. MASON.

Still another very heavy stroke awaited him. In the month of November, of the same year, his son, James Hall, a youth of most sterling character, and great promise, was seized with a fever, and sunk under it. Now more than ever was he bowed to the earth, and, though sustained by the firmest hopes of religion, could scarcely be comforted. On the the removal of the corse at the funeral, the pressure of his feelings forced from him this solemn address to the bearers, "Tread lightly, young men, tread lightly; you carry a temple of the Holy Ghost."

The students of the College with scarcely an exception were deeply affected by the event; and it was followed by an extensive revival of religion. In this Dr. Mason took a deep interest, and regarded it as a genuine work of the Spirit. A large proportion of the converts consecrated themselves to the labours of the ministry, and a number of them have become eminent in their office. His removal to Carlisle seemed like a mission ordered by an inscrutable and beneficent Providence for a special purpose. As has been beautifully said, "It was the twilight of a bright and radiant day—the closing service of a life of unwonted energy and usefulness."

If such gracious dispensations are valuable to the community at large, with what peculiar satisfaction do they come home to the hearts of pious parents and guardians! More than one of them took occasion to express their views on this subject:—

TO THE REV. DR. MASON, CARLISLE.

DANVILLE, January 16th, 1823.

DEAR SIR: It is with feelings of joy and gratitude of no ordinary kind, that information has reached us that a revival of religion has taken place in Dickinson College; and particularly that my son Samuel has afforded some hopes of having become a subject of it.

I need not mention to you, Sir, the pleasure which these things must have produced in your mind, affording no small consolation for the loss of a beloved son—whose lamented death, and the solemnities of whose funeral, were applied by the Spirit of promise to the hearts of such a goodly number of the students. I am happy to hear that the impression has been followed up by suitable instruction, so peculiarly necessary at a time of so serious an awakening. To be instrumental in preparing so many young men for the Gospel ministry, is at any time a pleasing service; but when you can send them forth with strong evidence of their genuine piety, it is particularly gratifying.

I trust the Lord will carry on his own work, until not only the College, but the town and neighbourhood, shall accept the offers of peace and salvation.

With sincere esteem I am, Dear Sir, your friend,

WILLIAM MONTGOMERY.

TO THE REV. DR. MASON, CARLISLE.

CITY OF WASHINGTON, July 29th, 1823.

REV. AND DEAR SIR: It was with a peculiar feeling of grateful recollections that I read your kind letter. I may truly say that, although years have passed since I had that pleasure, or a personal interview, yet frequently Mrs. Nourse and myself have reverted to that time, when we were occasionally favoured with your intercourse and ministry. Your kindness to my nephew James, the son of my brother Michael, I thankfully acknowledge, and trust that he will not prove unworthy of your notice.

Should I ever see my respected and dear friend face to face, I could not refrain from telling him the sense I have of the great obligations I am under to him for all his kindness, of which I shall have an increasing feeling from an increase in the knowledge of the ever blessed Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. An interview would indeed refresh my spirit. Mrs. Nourse and myself partake of a comfortable degree of health, and your wishes that our souls may prosper under the God of all grace are, I trust, in some degree realized by Him who maketh all things new, in bringing old truths to our remembrance with a fresh savour of loue to his name. We hope you will ere long pay Washington a visit. We join together in best respects and affectionate remembrances, being, my reverend and dear friend,

Truly yours,

JOSEPH NOURSE.

Under the pressure of his infirmities, increased by the various afflictions referred to above, Dr. Mason came to the conclusion that necessity was laid upon him to become released from every public burden. He accordingly gave notice to the trustees as early as April, 1824, that he should at the end of the year resign the office to which they had called him, thus giving them ample time to provide a successor. "The effect of my former visitation," he wrote to them, "has not left me. The lameness also occasioned by my accident, I had hoped would have been healed long ere this; but it effectually prevents those active services which I have been solicitous to perform. In these circumstances, gentlemen, you will not be surprised if I say that I feel myself admonished that it is time for me to retire from public life, and that I intend to withdraw. I should do injustice to my own feelings, in this perhaps last official communication which I may be called to make, did I omit the present opportunity of cordially thanking you for all your courtesy and friendship to me personally, and to express my wish and prayer that both you and yours may continue to increase in favour with God and man."

In consequence of the above notice, the trustees adopted measures for securing the services of a successor, in which they at length succeeded. This was made known in the following communication from a committee of the trustees to Dr. Mason:—

CARLISLE, Aug. 19, 1824.

DEAR SIR: We are requested by the Board of Trustees of Dickinson College to apprize you of the election of Dr. Neil, of Philadelphia, as Principal to fill the vacancy occasioned by your resignation, and that his duties will commence on the first day of September, the beginning of the next term.

We cannot omit on this occasion to express the sensibility evinced by the Board in realizing your separation from us. They only acceded to it as a measure proceeding from your own desire. Permit us to add an assurance that wherever you shall be, you will have the affectionate regard of the Trustees, and their warmest wishes for your happiness and prosperity.

We beg leave personally to tender to you the tribute of our great respect and esteem.

JOHN B. GIBSON,
JOHN REED,
GEORGE DUFFIELD, JR.
} Committee.

To this note the following answer was immediately returned:—

CARLISLE, August 22, 1824.

GENTLEMEN: I was favoured last evening with your note of the 19th instant, apprizing me of "the election of Dr. Neil, of Philadelphia, as Principal to fill the vacancy occasioned by my resignation."

I am very peculiarly gratified by the spirit of kindness and affection breathed in your note, and showing that we have no unkind emotion at parting. If anything can render it pleasant, it must be sentiments like those which you have been good enough to express.

It is to me a source of peculiar satisfaction that the Trustees have been enabled to procure a gentleman of Dr. Neil's standing, under whom it will be my happiness to hear that Dickinson thrives in number and character; and that she raises her head high among the seminaries of the land.

With every consideration of respect and esteem,
Your servant,
J. M. MASON.

Before the end of the year, he moved back to his native city, where in the midst of his surviving children and early friends, he spent the remnant of his days.

One of his last letters, which, being writtten with a tremulous hand, must have cost him considerable effort, was prompted by a deep feeling of regard for the memory of a pious friend in London, whose worthy name, already familiar to the readers of these pages, he wished to ingraft and perpetuate among his relatives on this side of the Atlantic—a wish which of course could not be denied. A copy of this letter will not be deemed an unsuitable portion of the present chapter:—

TO REV. J. V. V., SCHENECTADY.

NEW YORK, April 23, 1829.

MY DEAR SIR: My heart was gladdened yesterday by a letter from Sarah, announcing the birth of a son. May the blessing of the glorious Giver, accompany the gift; and enable you to preserve and rear him up for God! And may he keep him by his grace for his heavenly kingdom!

I hear you are somewhat at a loss for a name. The difficulty comes just in time. For years I have resolved, if the Lord should give me opportunity, to transplant the name of that saint of his into my family—*Joseph Hardcastle.* I rejoice that the opportunity has come at last, and hope I may not be too late in my application. Let *Joseph Hardcastle* then be his name of nobility. I trust that Mrs. Van Vechten will not object. No name do I more honour on earth, and may his graces go with it! No fairer name can she find among the sons of men. It will be a crown of permanent glory to her son, in exact proportion as he is enabled to follow the example of him whose name he shall bear.

My best love to Mrs. Van Vechten. Grace, mercy and peace be to her, and to her seed, from God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ! Let her remember, that if her children are called *soon*, it is generally in answer to their mother's prayers; and let her pray accordingly. Grace be with you, my dear Jacob. Your affectionate father,

J. M. MASON.

The only public service in which, during this period he officiated, was in baptizing a child of his successor, Dr. Snodgrass. On that occasion, he is said to have ministered with so much of his former majesty and evangelical unction, as very affectingly to remind his hearers of what he had been, and melted them to tears; and yet with so much difficulty and imperfection as convinced them that his mighty powers were permanently impaired. There were indeed times when he thought himself well enough to preach a sermon, but his friends dissuaded him from it. He regularly attended worship in the Murray Street Church, and expressed in strong terms his satisfaction with the preaching and privileges which he there enjoyed. Though he had ceased to mingle in society, he took an interest in passing events, especially in the movements of our benevolent institutions. The progress of the Bible Society afforded him peculiar pleasure. He also took pleasure in the calls of his friends. On such occasions he would sometimes through a happy association waken up to a very vivid recollection of past scenes and past transactions, so as almost by a renewed consciousness to enjoy them over again; but soon his returning lassitude showed that he had not sufficient energy to sustain such things for any length of time. Very few books interested him, except the Bible. This he felt to be his treasure and delight. Indeed, his thoughts habitually ran in the direction of its consoling truths. He continued till near the last to conduct the worship of his family morning and evening, and generally with almost as much clearness and pathos as had been usual in his better days. Sometimes indeed his sun would seem to break through all the clouds which involved him, and to shine forth with his former power and splendour; but such seasons were short, and occurred but seldom. He finally closed his eyes in peace at half-past eight o'clock of Sabbath morning, Dec. 26, 1829, in the 60th year of his age, being three years older than his father was at the time of his death. As the crisis approached, a friend remarked to him that there was but one source of consolation in his trying condition; "Yes," said he emphatically, "there is but one source of consolation, but *that is enough!*" When asked, "Is Jesus the Saviour precious to you?" "*He is, he is!*" was his reply. And these were among the last distinctly articulated words which he uttered.

CHAPTER XL.

CONCLUSION.

Dr. Mason in his Person—In his Family—In the Chamber of Sickness—In General Society—Among his Theological Sudents—In the Pulpit—In relation to certain cotemporary Preachers—His great achievement.

A FEW things of rather a general nature, which could not well be introduced before, must yet be added.

In his funeral sermon, Dr. Snodgrass remarked: "He was altogether of a more *princely* mould than the majority of even great men who were brought into competition with him upon the theatre of action."

From this language few will dissent who knew Dr. Mason in the days of his maturity and health. His presence was at once portly and pleasing. Any stranger would be struck by it; and in no company could he long be seen without attracting attention. His appearance on horseback has often elicited the remark, that "he would have made a most noble commander of an army." The remark was applicable not only to the physical, but to the intellectual man; to his bold conceptions and high daring; to his energy and resolution; and to the enthusiasm which he was capable of infusing into multitudes.

His stature was about six feet; his forehead was high, his brow strong, his eyes deep blue, the contour of his face oval, all its features regular, and in their combination remarkably expressive of thought, feeling, and courage. He was always neat, though plain in his apparel; and dignified, though easy in his manners.

In his family, he was cheerful, affectionate and happy. Every thing was conducted with the utmost regularity. Exactness and order were an invariable law of the house, to which every inmate soon learned to conform. The rules of propriety and decorum were also universally observed. Nor was there anything like difficulty or constraint in such observances. All of them, by a little attention and care, soon ripened into habits which seemed almost spontaneous. Never was there a better illustration of the facility with which household affairs can be brought to move in exact harmony by the establishment of system and punctuality. The Doctor himself afforded an eminent example of what he required from those around him.

His family worship and instruction, likewise, without doubt, contributed to this result. It was his custom to have the whole household together morning and evening, for uniting in devotional exercises. On these occasions it was usual, besides prayer, to read a portion of Scripture and to sing a few lines from Rouse's version of the Psalms. To these he added, in the morning, religious instruction to the children and servants. The former particularly, according to their ages, were required to recite two verses from the Bible, and portions of the Westminster Catechisms and Confession of Faith, with proofs attached and explained, every day, except Sabbaths, when they merely reviewed what had been gone over during the previous week. The time taken in these morning exercises was generally about half an hour. In a memorandum of reminiscences, prepared by Mrs. Knox, not long before her death, she says, that in this manner the older children had committed to memory the whole of the above named summaries, together with their proofs.

She further says: "The Sabbath was strictly observed. There was no visiting of any kind, except when sickness required it. On the evening of that day, we mentioned the texts or lectures of the day, and as much of his discourses as we could recollect. The length of these exercises varied as he was more or less fatigued with the duties of the day." To this may be added, that he endeavoured to make the Sabbath pleasant in his family, so that none of its members had any dread of its approach. His children had no tasks to learn on that day, and his servants had no feasts to prepare. To both he made it a day of rest. He wished them to regard it as sacred, but not as gloomy. He endeavoured to invest it with cheerfulness, rather than austerity. Generally on the morning of that day he read some portion of the Scriptures relating to the resurrection and triumphs of the Saviour, and endeavoured to lead the thoughts of his family into the same direction. Thus he at once sanctified the day, and made it welcome. Thus he gave it a brighter sun than that of other days, and rendered its appropriate observances more inviting. Without abating from its solemnity, he increased its attractiveness. This method, doubtless, had its share of influence in preparing young hearts for the joys of religion.

Days of humiliation, fasting and prayer, when properly appointed, were very particularly observed in his family. Besides public worship and abstinence from food, he engaged on such occasions in special exercises in his own house for the spiritual benefit of his children and domestics. He would sometimes take them one by one alone into his study where he addressed them directly on their personal religion, urging them earnestly and affectionately to attend without delay to their eternal interests, pressing them to take refuge in the only Saviour provided for us, and cautioning them never for a moment to stop short of him. Aware of the extreme danger of resting on any pillow of repose before coming to Christ, and knowing that under the light of the Gospel there could be no excuse for the sin of delaying to exercise a true living faith in this Divine Redeemer, he would send them directly to Christ, as revealed in the Gospel, and not first recommend any such use of means as does not include this true and living faith. After such conversation and prayer with each one of them separately, he assembled them all with their mother in the parlour, where he addressed the whole family together, and closed the day with a final prayer. An occasion like this could not fail of drawing forth all the sensibilities of such a soul as Dr. Mason's, or of leaving any dry eyes or unmelted hearts among those who were present. A particular occasion of this sort, was many years afterwards spoken of with peculiar interest by more than one of those who were present.

If an infant of the family was to be offered up in baptism, he endeavoured to improve the occasion for the benefit of the children who were old enough to understand the meaning and use of the solemn transaction.

"I remember," says Mrs. Knox, "on the occasion of the baptism of one of the younger children—either James or Erskine—his taking brother John and myself apart, telling us that our little brother was to be baptized that afternoon; that we knew what it meant; and that we both were old enough to go by ourselves and pray that he might be made one of the lambs of Christ's fold."

As might be expected from such training, he had the great satisfaction of seeing all his children, as they advanced in life, "walking in the footsteps of the flock;" and two of them preachers of the Gospel. Few parents have been more eminently blessed in their offspring. To this may be added the satisfaction of seeing several of his servants becoming decidedly pious under his roof.

In visiting the sick, his soul was always most tenderly and deeply moved. His aim was to bring their minds at once to the essence of evangelical piety; that is, to secure their union and fellowship with the Son of God as revealed in the Scriptures, and thus to cheer them with the bright hopes of an endless life. An occasion of this kind is remembered, which was followed by the most felicitous results. A gentleman and lady who moved in the prosperous and gay circles of society, and entertained either sceptical or very erroneous views respecting the doctrines of Christianity, were in the habit of attending at his place of worship. They were doubtless drawn thither more by the talents and eloquence of the preacher than by any particular regard for the messages which he brought. The lady fell into a decline, and even in the extremity of a sinking condition, remained blind to the reality of her character in the sight of her Almighty Judge, and insensible to the awfulness of the account which she must soon render. A pious friend however, prevailed upon her and her husband to send for their Pastor. The Doctor went and soon discovered their fearfully deluded state in relation to God and eternity. He faithfully set before them the truth, that the Gospel contains not one word of comfort for any beings but such as are utterly undone and guilty; and that there was no possible refuge for any dying creature of our race, but in the atoning death and sovereign grace of that Divine Saviour who is made known to us in the Scriptures. Deeply affected himself, he approached God in prayer with such wrestling and prevailing power as overwhelmed all present. He returned home greatly distressed in mind for the sufferer, as was observed by the family, and is still recollected with distinctness by survivors. A day or two after, he was again called in, when to his astonishment and unutterable joy he found that a great change had taken place, and that she had been enabled with cordiality to embrace those humbling but precious truths which he had presented to her mind; and that she was in the enjoyment of such peace as arises from reposing unreservedly upon the righteousness and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. When at length she closed her eyes in death, she was full of the hope inspired by her new views of God and the Saviour. It proved likewise, we are informed, the introduction of evangelical views of religion in a leading family of a neighbouring state.

In general society, he was affable and pleasant. Endowed with unusual colloquial powers, he was often the life of the company; and always contributed his full share to its pleasure and its profit. Yet he never usurped an undue share of the conversation, but uniformly treated all present with courtesy, and received their remarks with deference and respect. He was no less interesting to the young than to the old; to the literary than to the religious. Never did he lodge or sojourn in the house of a friend without making himself agreeable to all its inmates, or without being received there ever afterwards as a most welcome guest.

In every business transaction he was in a most eminent degree honourable and fair. He would no sooner take any undue advantage of a man than commit a highway robbery. Never would he have any connexion with anything sinister or concealed. His statements could always be relied upon as the simple verity. There was such a transparency in all he did or said as never to give occasion for the inquiry or suspicion whether it were exactly so, or whether anything additional or different were intended.

As already shown, Dr. Mason's mode of instructing his theological students was characterized by a very strong desire to form their minds to the habit of investigating the Sacred Scriptures for themselves. He likewise taught them systematic theology—taking for his guide the Westminister Confession of

Faith, which he considered the best defined and most comprehensive compendium of divine truth ever produced. He taught them to state doctrines with great precision, to arrange them in their proper order, and to support them by appropriate texts. He had no objection to the common systems, though he had little patience with those of them which heaped up quotations and strung on *classes argumentorum* without proper regard to their real bearing. The true meaning of every proof text he subjected to a rigid investigation, and loaded none with a greater burden than it could bear, at the same time admitting with candour the force of objections. He pitied the man who could say, that when a student, he had learned the system so perfectly as not to have added to his store a new theological idea for thirty years. He thought no minister did justice to himself, who was not continually making progress. He expected no addition to divine revelation, but he aimed at improvements in the art of developing its treasures. He expected no change in those great cardinal truths which are fraught with salvation, and which every humble believer embraces; but he looked for progress in human qualifications for exhibiting and defending them. The *communes loci* should be well understood, as they easily may be, and the usual texts should be familiar; but that public teacher is ill-furnished for this work, who looks no further. Even the petrifactions of the oldest period have their use; but you must add to them other soil and other seed, if you wish to make the garden of the Lord either fruitful or fair.

He also embraced in his plan an outline of the principles of church history; but thought that its details must almost necessarily be left to private reading. The composition and delivery of sermons commanded a large share of attention. But after all, his chief concern was with the Bible. This he considered the inexhaustible fountain from which his pupils must learn to draw living water. It required, he thought, a critical acquaintance with the languages in which the sacred volume had been originally written. This was accordingly one of his first aims. Indeed he always lamented, that a more thorough knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek languages could not be insisted on as a necessary prerequisite to the commencement of a theological course; and if it could have been so, as he once proposed in the Synod, he doubtless would have witnessed, in greater number and in greater lustre, the triumphs of his plan; the full benefit of which required a better preparation at the start. As it was, his students, with few exceptions, became intensely interested in their pursuit. He had a talent to make every subject which he treated attractive; but especially did he make the sacred record appear richer than a mine of gold, and fill every one with a desire to become possessed of its wealth, and with a willingness to work for it. In an unusual degree, he succeeded to inspire them with admiration and love of the Scriptures; to impress them with their divine authority and unspeakable value; to give them confidence in their certainty, and delight in their excellence; and to furnish them with a key for unlocking their stores.

Nothing did he urge and re-urge so much, as to use their own faculties; to think for themselves; and to become, to a very great extent, their own instructors. As in his catechetical mode of proceeding, he ascertained the extent of their knowledge, capacity and skill, individually, he was enabled to judge what they respectively wanted, and to adapt himself to their necessities. At the same time the students were brought to a nearer view of his mind in its various processes and achievements, and in those peculiar methods of grappling with difficult subjects by which he had been enabled in such an eminent degree to master them, and to render them interesting. There was a coming into close contact with a mind of vigour, ardour, and brilliancy, in actual operation, which gives off from its own properties to the learner. Never were young minds awakened to higher or holier aspirations than those which were awakened in his classes; and never was there felt a more transporting admiration or affection for a teacher. Nor were the versatility and power of his talents and the elevation of his soul ever more conspicuous. Indeed there was usually such a combination of logic, learning, wit, earnestness, and spirituality, as appeared truly astonishing.

He moreover felt such a sincere regard for the young men of his charge, and took such pains to counsel them respecting everything appertaining to their future usefulness and comfort, as seemed to them almost paternal, and could not fail to secure their attachment and confidence.

Many maxims and suggestions of sound practical sense, he was in the habit of giving them, and knew well how to improve occasions and opportunities for doing so. On appointing them subjects for examination, for instance, he would tell them: "Consult commentators, but use your own minds more"—"Study more by subjects than by books"—"Never fail of fulfilling your appointments, or of being punctual"—"Want of punctuality is want of virtue." With regard to time, he used to say, "'Gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost.' Almost every day, we have little intervals of time which are apt to be overlooked, which yet may be improved to the very best purpose. Every moment of time is too precious to be wasted." His own habit was to have always some subject in his mind—such perhaps as that of a contemplated sermon; then whenever he walked or rode, or happened to have a moment's leisure or respite from business, or break in conversation, he would recur to it and revolve it in his thoughts. Many of his best discourses were prepared in this way. The habit of thus thinking he had very much cultivated. Indeed, without it, he could not have met a tithe of the calls upon him.

There was one occasion, at the close of each term which few of his students could forget. It was a sort of farewell meeting, when he gave them the benefit of his own experience and observation on various points which he thought young men in their circumstances might find useful; such as their conversation and manners among themselves, among their friends, among strangers, among Christians, in travelling and at hotels, in general society and towards persons of different sexes, ages, or ranks. More particularly did he counsel them about their mental cultivation; their selection of books and their method of reading them, their recreation and exercise for health, their personal cleanliness—thinking it allied to moral purity. Still more did he enlarge on their professional studies and duties; their manner of attending to their various departments of labour; their settlement and companionship for life; in a word, everything which could affect their future standing and influence. Above all, did he carefully probe their views and motives in entering the sacred office; insist with emphasis on the cultivation of personal piety, and press this subject close home to them, with a solemnity and affection which could scarcely be exceeded. Never can we forget the striking and impressive manner in which he once said, "No dray-horse in the street is such a drudge as that minister of the Gospel who does not love his work." Never, it is believed, did he so get near his students, or so gain fast hold upon their hearts, or so pour out his own feelings in undisguised simplicity and tenderness, as on these occasions. Before he closed, he was often overwhelmed by his emotions, and obliged to stop, while not a dry eye was left in the room. The meeting continued about an hour, and was always closed with prayer, as indeed were all his meetings for instruction. Such partings served very much to rivet the attachment of his students; and to heighten their admiration of his character, both for wisdom and for worth.

In his intercourse with them he was remarkably frank, open, affable and kind. No parent could be more so. Never did he appear haughty, overbearing, or severe. *Insolence*, indeed, he would not have endured. Everything like impertinence would, no doubt, have received his withering rebuke; but modest worth, though somewhat dull and slow, he always treated with patience. Never did he wear a repulsive aspect. Never did he approach one with the chill of an assumed dignity, or affect mystery and reserve. He gained respect without aiming at it. He had no need of any of those studied arts, or artificial miens, by which secondary men sometimes contrive to appear great. He could afford to be open, undisguised, and even familiar. He stood in no danger from undue liberties. Never was a student known to offer him a disrespectful or improper lisp.

Nor was he dogmatical in his opinions; but always ready to give reasons for every position taken, and to make his meaning plain to every capacity. He never wished any one to give his assent without being convinced. He would patiently hear and answer every objection, and always do full justice to his opponents. Though he might differ from them, he would readily acknowledge whatever ability they might possess, or whatever force might be seen in their arguments. If, as rarely happened, any difficulty was presented which he could not remove, he would not hesitate a moment to admit it. Entire candour was one of his unmistakable characteristics. Everything fair, honourable, generous and true, were the ornaments which he wore. These were among the qualities which captivated the hearts of his young friends, and bound them to him with an enthusiasm and warmth little short of idolatrous.

But though a nearer view of the man was afforded from his professorial chair, yet he was more extensively known to the world at large from THE PULPIT. And much as we may have learned concerning his active and laborious life, from the preceding pages, we are yet comparatively uninformed, if we leave out of sight those very able discourses which for so many years, Sabbath after Sabbath, he delivered to his congregation.

The first time the compiler heard him preach was in the month of November, 1809; and such a specimen of preaching he had never heard before—so simple, so clear, yet so rich; so instructive, yet so interesting; so powerful, yet so tender; so full of majesty, yet so winning. He seemed to dwell in a region of thought and feeling, many degrees removed from that of ordinary preachers; an atmosphere of light and warmth peculiarly his own. It so happened that he was just commencing a course of expository lectures on the First Epistle to the Corinthians. He appeared to be familiar with everything relating to those churches, and without effort to set forth in an easy and lucid manner whatever might be necessary for understanding the full meaning and force of the Apostle's language. The history of the people and of the city—their philosophy, literature and arts—their temples, their religious opinions and their religious rites—their national temper, their public sports, their social habits, and their tone of morals; the entrance of the Gospel among them, the revolutions which it had achieved, the organization of Christian societies, and the various influences which had afterwards sprung up to disturb their peace, mar their beauty, and retard their progress; all these seemed to be present to his mind, and to furnish him with the best materials for his work. His thoughts, though so abundant, and even superabundant, were most completely arranged, and never jostled against each other, or presented themselves in confused groups. On every topic he said enough, and never too much. He knew what points to make prominent, and what to pass over. He was for the most part calm and deliberate, yet never dull; and occasionally swelling and rising with a thought or emotion which he could not suppress. On the whole, the effect upon his audience at this time was that of entire satisfaction with the acquisition of valuable truth, without transports of rapture. A few Sabbaths later, however, in the progress of his exposition, occasion was given for such bursts of impassioned eloquence as were perfectly overwhelming.

The life and character of Paul, he had profoundly studied, and was filled with the result. The apostle's early history, his native energy, his powerful intellect, his extensive learning, his readiness and skill to apply what he knew, his ardour and impetuosity, his strength of will, his boldness of enterprise, his loftiness of aim, his stubbornness of national prejudice and pride combined with the fanatical zeal of his bigoted sect, the terrible force given to his persecuting rage by reducing it to a system, and by taking a "commission from the high priest for haling men and women to prison" as he was "laying waste the church and breathing out threatening and slaughter against the brethren;"—then that sublime and glorious visitation from heaven which overtook him on his way to Damascus, and conquered his rage and made him a meek inquirer after the way of salvation—the mighty change by which the enraged wild beast became a lamb, the furious persecutor an humble disciple, and by which his towering abilities became enlisted in favour of the cause which he had before destroyed, so that instead of seeing in his course a sweeping whirlwind and a desolating flood, men saw in it only those labours which plant and water the seeds of eternal life; then his humility and love and gentleness, combined with his activity and zeal and faith and patience and perseverance, and sore conflicts internal and external, and his blessed triumphs; his sublime career, as, seeing the vast ruin of a race lying in wickedness, he moved forward with a wisdom and strength not his own, in preaching the gospel of redeeming grace, as God's appointed method for raising them to holiness and to heaven—like the sun at the deluge, darting an ardent look upon a sunken world, and, conducted by an invisible hand, pursuing his lofty track to dissipate the curse which their iniquities had brought;—all this seemed to be realized by the preacher and to have fired in his soul a kindred feeling. Paul's entire character and career were perhaps never more correctly or more fully conceived; or more justly and faithfully pourtrayed for the contemplation of others. Indeed the speaker seemed to share the same mind, and to feel moved by the same impulse with his subject. The thought of what Paul was, especially as the apostle of the Gentiles, struck a chord which vibrated through his soul, and awakened the best powers with which he was endowed. It seemed to touch, as with a spark, a magazine of the most interesting associations, and to kindle such emotions and desires as are the inspiration of eloquence. Such was Dr. Mason's appearance on the occasion referred to, and many times afterward.

In the course of a few weeks, we were permitted to attend his ministration at a communion season. To describe it adequately, is impossible. It was indeed a rich feast and full of love. To say that it was transcendently solemn, interesting and touching, is feeble language. It might be thought extravagant to say that it partook more of heaven than of earth; but we may say that it seemed to have far more of heaven in it than any scene which we had ever before witnessed. It was at least an approach to what Paul calls "heavenly places." The minister's soul was filled with the things which he had learned and experienced in the school of an intimate divine communion. He seemed to feel a near affinity with holy beings of another sphere, and to realize the presence and the grace of that Supreme Master whom he served, and whose death, of the profoundest import and virtue, was, by his own appointment, commemorated in the church. He seemed to have a near view of that divine Saviour who had come from the depths of infinite and eternal love, through his humanity to make God known to our race, and to perform for them his redeeming work; to harmonize God's attributes, to establish his authority, to illustrate and enforce the principles of his government; then to receive rebels into favour, and to bring them by his word and spirit into reconciliation and friendship with heaven. His mind and heart were full of all those sublime and tender ideas respecting Christ and the assembly of his saints which are taught at large in the Gospel, and cluster around this holy institution, and are summed up in its significant and impressive symbols. Then there was so much reverence, humility, love, and confidence blended with holy joy, that his face almost shone as if he were holding converse with God on the Mount. His heart flowed out in thanksgiving and praise to God, and in tears of affection to his people; in thoughts and feelings and expressions, which none but the Father of lights could have given him.

It is believed that to no one who has ever attended Dr. Mason's services on a communion Sabbath, the foregoing remarks will appear overwrought or misplaced. The peculiar interest which he both felt and imparted on such occasions, was doubtless based on his deep conviction of the supreme divinity of Christ, united with a conviction equally deep of the vital union and communion between Christ and his people by the indwelling of his Spirit.

On the former point, he had once, while a student, experienced a sore conflict; but was mercifully relieved by one of those special Divine manifestations which impart such "a self-evidencing power to God's word," and which "open our eyes to behold wondrous things" out of it, and satisfy us with a clear insight into its meaning and its glory. In a written memorandum left by his daughter, Mrs. Knox, before referred to, she says: "I recollect hearing my father speak of difficulties which he once had concerning the divinity of Christ, and his anguish, feeling as he did, that the Bible was no good news to guilty man if that doctrine were untrue; that one night in particular, the distress of his mind was exceedingly great, when the beginning of the third chapter of Malachi was borne home upon his mind with such power that he was immediately and thoroughly relieved—never having a doubt on the subject afterward." A passage in his diary has probably reference to the same crisis. And this may account for his extreme sensibility on this point. He regarded it as entering into the very essence and vitality of all true Christian hope. Those who have often heard him, must have been struck with the power and feeling with which he was moved, whenever he had occasion to speak on this topic. His soul was all alive respecting it. He had very evidently thought and felt most profoundly on the great subjects of Christ's mediation and atonement; on those great principles of God's moral government which are essentially connected with these august transactions, and on those vast interests of both time and eternity which they involve. It was evident that he habitually made them subjects of reflection; and especially that at the approach of each communion season, as a suitable preparation, he sought and received a fresh unction to his mind with regard to them.

From the innermost experience of his own heart, likewise, he felt the nature and importance of the Spirit's influence, in opening up the Scriptures, in enlightening the mind with spiritual apprehensions, in manifesting God's glory, in renovating the affections, and in bringing us into fellowship with God and his saints.

In all his ministrations he proved himself "mighty in the Scriptures." This credit was probably never denied him in any quarter. The Bible was the basis on which he was formed, and on which he thought all ministers of the Gospel ought to be formed, and on which they ought to rely for success. He had no hope for the diffusion of pure religion among mankind, but by the simple and earnest exhibition of God's own word in the labours of his living ambassadors. From no other source could he expect any radical and essential improvement, either in the individual, or in the structure of society. He had accordingly, from an early age, made himself very familiar with every part of the sacred volume; especially with Genesis Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Isaiah, the Gospels, Acts, and the Epistles. In every part of these he always seemed very much at home; and he was remarkable for the minute accuracy with which he quoted them. On one occasion the writer recollects he was engaged to address a quarterly meeting of the Young Men's Missionary Society, held in a public school room on Chatham street. It so happened, that the President, Mr. John D. Keese, without any preconcert, read a chapter of his own selection, out of Isaiah. This chapter the Doctor made the foundation of his discourse, and it is believed the Society were never favoured with a more able, clear, well connected, and animating view of the nature, grandeur, and prospects of the enterprise in which they were embarked.

At this period he lectured every Wednesday evening, to a full church, on the Shorter Catechism. These lectures were exceedingly instructive and interesting. They were very highly valued, not only by his congregation, but by the students of the Seminary, and a number of ministers who regularly attended them. He showed himself to be amply furnished with everything requisite in the didactic and polemical systems of Theology, in stating with precision, and in proving, illustrating, defending and enforcing the doctrines of the Gospel, in every part, with the hand of a master.

The force and effect with which Dr. Mason *read the Scriptures in public*, has often been noticed. It consisted not merely in the exact propriety of his accents, pauses and intonations, but also in a certain indescribable expression of countenance and manner. He seemed in very unusual degrees to enter into the meaning and spirit of what he read. There was nothing artificial or stiff, but all seemed like the natural impulses and promptings of a soul that was both enlightened and quickened. Withal he seemed to have a distinct and just con-conception of the characters introduced, as also of the scene, the circumstances, and the associations of the occasion. To all these his feelings seemed to be alive; he caught their spirit, and gave them expression in such a way as to instruct, as well as greatly to affect the minds and hearts of the audience. We cannot become such readers of the Scriptures as he was by any lectures on rhetoric, or instruction in the art of reading; we cannot without gaining such an insight into their meaning and such an experience of their power as he had; in a word, without being like him, both in our mental and physical structure, and in our attainments both intellectual and spiritual. One great secret of his art was his intimate acquaintance with the Divine records, and his profound reverence for the disclosures which they make, and for the high source of them. When he read, he seemed to realize that he was standing before God, and was honoured as an organ to give sound to God's truth. When he read, for example, the visions of Isaiah, he seemed to be moved and carried away by them as the prophet himself had been. When he read of Paul, his knowledge and admiration of Paul's character seemed to throw a glowing radiance around the words which he had spoken, the actions which he had performed, the assaults which he had endured, and all the circumstances in which he had been placed. By consciousness of a vivid realization, the faith, the patience, the self-denial, the humility, the love, the zeal, the wisdom, the noble daring, and the never-fainting perseverance of the Apostle, seemed to impart themselves to the reader, and thus in a measure to the hearer. When he found him at Athens, the glory of Greece in its memories of heroism, and in its proud monuments of learning and of art, contrasted with the sad memorials of its debasing superstition, crowded upon his mind, and gave additional interest to his subject. Above all, when he read of Jesus, the divine glory of the Saviour, and the wonders of his incarnation, his life, and his death, the triumphs of his resurrection, the progress of his gospel, the victories of his truth over ignorance and error everywhere, the conversion of all nations, and the final establishment of an universal kingdom of righteousness and love forever, seemed to rush upon his mind and fill him with the most sublime emotions. Without similar powers and attainments we cannot approach the excellence of such a reader.

In *preaching*, these accomplishments were still more conspicuous. As he had not any notes before him, he enjoyed greater freedom, and could with more facility give expression to the things which he thought and felt. In an eminent degree, he had the power of giving his hearers an inside view of his own mind, and of bringing them into sympathy with the same. He made them to see and to share the pure and noble conceptions which filled his understanding and kindled his affections. You felt yourself brought into a communion which was both rich and sweet. Yet you felt that all you shared was but a part of what was stored in his mind; and still more abundantly stored in that Holy Volume from which his mind had been furnished. He introduced you into the treasure-house of his King, though you might not be able at once to enter all its apartments, or explore all its wealth.

His preaching was also remarkably *suggestive*. As a skilful painter is able, by a single article or appendage, to set forth the whole appearance and character of a man; or an accomplished sculptor, by the position of a limb or the swell of a muscle, to express an emotion or a passion, a habit or a life; so he had power by a single stroke to draw a full portrait, or to paint an entire scene; and to give meaning and force to the laconic phrases which he delighted to employ. He would often by a single sentence or even word, strike out a train of thought for his hearers and stimulate their minds to pursue it; or he would burst upon them with a grand or a beautiful image, which awakened their imagination to trace out a bright scene, or a succession of bright scenes, which afforded them delight, and which they felt reluctant to leave. He was more abundant in short metaphors than in protracted similes. He never hung on to a thought till he had presented it in every possible aspect. He preferred to leave many things for the hearer's imagination to supply and complete.

Upon the whole, for a combination of clearness, power, majesty, bold conceptions, profound thought, sublime and tender emotions, evangelical richness and unction, natural and impressive utterance, adaptation of style and manner to varying subjects and assemblies, Dr. Mason would probably not lose by a comparison with the best preachers that have adorned the modern pulpit.

If we were required to *analyse* his eloquence, we could scarcely fail of discovering several distinct qualities which contributed to the result. His voice, for example, was singularly deep-toned, and yet melodious; strong, yet not harsh; of great compass, and yet suited to expressions in a very whisper; clear, distinct, commanding, and yet in prayer most reverential and supplicatory, possessing great flexibility, and easily accommodated to every variety of use.

His deep blue eye was equally indicative of intelligence and of sensibility. With his other features, it would often brighten up and become almost radiant with what was passing within. There seemed to be at times a sort of transparency in his countenance for the shining forth of his soul; it seemed almost lighted up with a higher than earthly effulgence, and affording the best illustration of Milton's "human face divine." The tones of his voice withal, and the expressions of his countenance, were ever most happily changing with those shades of meaning which he wished to convey.

But his highest qualifications resided in his strong, well balanced and richly furnished mind. His knowledge of things was clear, extensive and well defined. Especially was his insight into the Scriptures both profound and familiar, while he was deeply imbued with their spirit. His power of illustration was great, and he seemed to have at command whatever of history or science or art or literature or passing events or choice words, was requisite for his purpose. His command of language was great. He was often laconic, but never obscure. His allusions were natural, often exquisitely delicate, never far-fetched. His imagination was both powerful and vivid; but under the control of a sound judgment and good taste. He made it his servant and not his master. Though his discourses were rich in ornament, as well as illustration, he was never led off from his main purpose by those muses and those graces which danced and played around him. The fruit was never hidden by foliage and flowers. Force he would never sacrifice to fancy, or to any fastidiousness of taste. A strong thought, he would never weaken by little prettinesses of artificial rhetoric. For the sake of emphasis, he would sometimes be abrupt, and almost rough, but never low. Affectation of every kind he abhorred. Studied stateliness, theatric attitudes and starts, were most uncongenial to his nature. He had majesty, but no parade; simple grandeur, but no assumed dignity and circumstance; no artifice whatever for effect, but a masterly power to magnify his office. His looks, every muscle of his face, and every movément of his body, were instinct with intelligence and emotion, and were prompted from within. He spoke as he thought and felt. Always master of his subject and deeply interested in it, he was naturally led and even urged into expressions, tones and gestures, at once the most significant and the most becoming.

Hence everything varied with time, place and circumstances. His discourses on a communion Sabbath, for instance, were very different from those of ordinary occasions. How different too were his prayers from his sermons, in style, tone and spirit! He was awed by the Divine presence whenever he lifted up his eyes with his heart. It has been said of his father that he used to make a perceptible paüse on pronouncing the name of God. The son had not this pause; but there was always a marked indication of reverence and love. He seemed awed and subdued, yet confiding and free.

But in addressing the people, his tone and manner were altered. He became more unrestrained, and most fearlessly and faithfully, though compassionately, did he deal out the weighty messages with which he was charged. Most earnest was he, not only to instruct, but to awaken and to win. His sermons were not mere official exercises, but a matter of real life in which he viewed every hearer personally interested. He sought not to please, but to save; not to afford entertainment, but benefit. He did not play the orator, but in simplicity and sincerity endeavoured to warn, to alarm, to convert and to edify. He was not the actor aiming at anything like stage representation, but had a business to transact and a real object to gain; and in order to gain it, was armed with truth and warmed with love. He laboured to present, and to urge home eternal things in the strongest and most effectual manner.

Comparison has sometimes been made between Dr. M. and two of his distinguished cotemporaries in Great Britain. There is doubtless some ground for it in certain strong features of resemblance, but at the same time, there were such differences as to leave the idiosyncrasy of each undisturbed. Each one of them was great in his own way; and that way was no disparagement to the excellence of the others. Perhaps no three individuals were ever better qualified, by their endowments and attainments, by their aims and pursuits, by their similarity of views on great subjects, and their congeniality of spirit, to appreciate each other's character and rejoice in each other's success. And it is most gratifying to know that their personal acquaintance with each other awakened no other feelings between them, than those of mutual admiration and friendship.

Dr. Chalmers was great and overpowering. With all the honest simplicity of a child, he was philosophical; he was original; he was magnificent; his imagination soared aloft with more than an eagle's flight, and reflected much of the grandeur which he surveyed. No man ever went beyond him in continuing long on the wing, and sustaining a train of noble thoughts, illuminating them with ever-varying illustration, and adorning them at every turn with new beauty. He was unrivalled too in the force which he gave to his discourses by their singular unity arising from so exclusive a confinement to a single point, and from the persevering earnestness with which he brought everything to bear upon that one point alone till it was pushed to its utmost result. But at the same time, was he not often too long about it? Did not his hearers sometimes feel wearied with their detention? Did they not sometimes think that they had "compassed this mountain long enough," and sigh to turn directly towards the desired rest? Do we not sometimes take more pleasure in going home by a direct path through the open field, than to wander so far round through the forest, though a glorious sunshine may everywhere break through the trees and their foliage? Had he not often made his subject perfectly clear and secured the conviction of every mind, long before he would let you off? Were not his hearers sometimes overloaded with illustrations and overdazzled with imagery? Was there always just occasion for such a great expenditure of force? Was it best to be always so much on the stretch, and transported with enthusiasm? Was such constant tension of thought and feeling always most effective? Would he not have found an advantange in occasionally lowering his wing, or even in walking somewhat calmly and familiarly with us among the things of earth?

Dr. Mason himself considered Dr. Chalmers as specially raised up by Providence for the times and circumstances in which he was placed; he considered him preëminently fitted for introducing and maintaining spiritual views of the Gospel among the splendid circles of those philosophical and literary hearers with which he was surrounded; and he looked upon him as shining with triumphant lustre in the high and difficult sphere to which he was exalted. It may yet be asked however, without presumption, whether he was as rich in Bible truth as his American friend and admirer? Did not his philosophical turn of mind, and the force of circumstances, somewhat withdraw him from the best armoury of his profession? Was he, though evangelical, as fully spiritual as his friend? Was he as discriminating? Did he make as pleasing variations in his style and manner in natural accordance with changing subjects and occasions? Could he express as much meaning in as few words? Was he not sometimes too diffuse?

On some of these points his American brother seemed somewhat different. His discourses perhaps showed more condensation of thought, and more thorough acquaintance with the lively oracles. Perhaps they were more enriched with scripture appropriately applied, beautifully elucidated, and powerfully enforced. In publicly expounding the Sacred volume, as after the Scottish custom, he generally did in the forenoon of every Lord's day, Dr. Mason has perhaps not been excelled since the days of Calvin. It is not too much to say that he always did it in a clear and captivating manner. His hearers were never weary of it. He imparted to them a relish for the food which he thus gave them. When he had finished his exposition of the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, his enthusiastic follower, Dr. Tillary, was probably not alone in regretting "that more of the Apostles' acts had not been recorded."

The only specimen of this mode of preaching which he has left is on the 23rd Psalm. The best of his lectures, as well as of his sermons, were never written.

Robert Hall had also his peculiar province. He was more *finished* in his performances than the other two. Equally comprehensive, he was more elegant. He was wonderfully condensed, yet perfectly clear, and perfectly graceful. He selected more exquisite flowers, and arranged them more tastefully. His learning, his logic, his profound thought, his strong feeling, all did homage to his *taste*. He had more of the Apollo than his two compeers; but less of the Hercules. The club he would not use because it was an uncouth weapon; or he would first make it smooth, though by the process he diminished its weight. His very sword he would sometimes weaken by the degree of polish which he gave it. He paid more attention to beauty than to effective force. He sometimes only dazzled, when he should have wounded and slain. Both Dr. Chalmers and Dr. M. were less nice, and for that reason often more powerful. Mr. Hall could as deeply interest and captivate an highly educated audience, but the other two could more triumphantly overwhelm a promiscuous mass of both learned and unlearned hearers. They were so much engrossed and carried away with their great conceptions as often to overlook minuter beauties. They were so intent upon a bold and striking outline, as to neglect some finer strokes of the pencil.

Whatever may be thought of the above comparison, no candid reader of this volume will deny that Dr. Mason's endowments and achievements were alike eminent. He possessed an originality and power which, without losing sight of the past, carried him far into the future. Connected with a small denomination without wealth and hemmed in by foreign peculiarities, under the most adverse and discouraging circumstances, he projected, inaugurated and carried into successful operation a system of ministerial education which had no precedent in this country, and which was soon followed by many kindred institutions, which are now spreading in every direction influences which promise very materially and permanently to affect the destinies of our race. In the city of New York he gave an important direction and impulse to the claims and progress of classical education. He gave essential aid to the cause of Missions while in its infancy; and was ever among the foremost in promoting every well devised scheme of Christian benevolence. He removed out of the way narrow and inveterate restrictions on Christian liberty, and, with his own heart, opened the church doors of his denomination to fellowship with all who love a common Master. Everything which he touched received the impress of his great and original mind. Even in church architecture, especially with regard to that important part—the pulpit, he furnished a model, which, though derided at the time, has been substantially followed ever since.

APPENDIX A.

ADDRESS TO THE ANTIBURGHER SYNOD.

[REFERRED TO IN CHAPTER I.]

REVEREND SIRS : We received the circular letter you wrote by order of Synod, and would have acknowledged it sooner, had we not been hindered by a variety of incidents, that need not be mentioned. It was laid before the Brethren, and I am desired by them to communicate their sentiments to you in the following manner :—

It grieves us to find that our Fathers and Brethren in Scotland are so far from *following the things that make for peace*, that they charge us with a practical *recession* from the cause of God, for no other reason we know of, but our endeavoring to terminate a difference, which, we apprehend, has been unspeakably injurious to the Secession.

Whatever artful colourings have been induced on the controversy that has *divided us in Jacob, and scattered us in Israel*, we are persuaded that when prejudices subside, even the most violent partisans will be disposed to own that it is extremely ridiculous in its nature, and has produced a train of the most dreadful consequences.

It is very distressing to reflect that such a respectable body of ministers and people, agreeably united in the same Confession of Faith, Directory for Worship, and Form of Church Government, and *lately* expelled from the Judicatures of the established church for their *earnest contending for the Faith once delivered to the saints*, widely differed in their sentiments, and disputed with unparalleled fierceness about the meaning of some Burgess oaths, and of some acts of the Revolution Parliament. It is still more afflicting to consider that this litigation was prosecuted to a *crisis*, that split them into opposite communions, and produced a species of spiritual persecution as violent, perhaps, as any that ever raged in the Christian church. The disinterested stood amazed. Posterity will be struck with astonishment at this dreadful conflagration kindled by a spark amongst brethren renowned for their orthodoxy and unanimity, and who were distinguished by the honourable character of the Lord's *witnessing remnant.* The horrors of this scene are painted in the most lively colours in that Divine apostrophe : "Be astonished, O ! ye heavens, at this, and be ye horribly afraid : be ye very desolate."

That this unhappy controversy has shed the most malignant influences on the interests of religion is a mournful truth everywhere evident in Scotland. The moment our union was dissolved, Christian affection was almost entirely banished from our hearts, which were immediately inspired with ill-nature and revenge. Instead of endearing converse about the blessed Jesus, little was heard amongst us but the shameful bawlings of angry disputation. The nearest relatives, and once most affectionate friends, beheld one another with a vindictive eye, and were mutually treated with a rudeness scarcely to be found among heathens standing under parallel connexions. So raging was the infatuation, that many esteemed it a daring provocation of the most high God to join with any of the opposite party in the most general acts of Divine worship—in family prayer, or even in asking the Lord's blessing upon, and returning Him thanks for, the bounties of common providence. Ministers, instead of digging in the golden mine of Divine revelation, that they might be more extensively qualified for displaying to their hearers the unsearchable riches of the Redeemer, laboured with amazing anxiety, in the study of acts of Parliament, that they might be possessed of a fund of *Political science,* sufficient to enable them to harangue their people into a fiery zeal against their *absent* brethren who happened to differ from them in some of their *political views.* Many people were pleased to have it so. They hung upon the lips of their preachers, as they were demonstrating that such and such things were done or not done at the Revolution ; while they heard with the utmost indifference the all-important truths of the glorious Gospel. As a native consequence of this, litigious politics became the grand subject of converse on Sabbath days ; and, as though the opposite party had not been already sufficiently abused from the pulpit, their characters were also opprobriously handled by the hearers, as they were going home from the house of God. It is not with a sneer, but with pierced hearts that we mention these shocking instances of mutual guilt. Some of us remember the mournful scene, and desire to be humbled for the part we acted ; and we scarce think yourselves can recollect it without blushing and remorse. We wish there may not be any reason to fear that the same irreligious fervour glows to this day in the hearts of some from whom better things might be expected.

To perpetuate a controversy so absurd in its nature, and that has done infinite mischief to the cause of God, is absolutely inexcusable. We have no ground to expect that our conduct will be justified at the Supreme tribunal, if we neglect any means in our power that may serve to bring it to an honourable termination. Some means are in our power. Why may not an attempt be made to procure an alteration in the form of the disputed oaths? What law of Heaven would be violated by our holding friendly interviews, in order to our being better acquainted with one another's minds ; especially, as there is great reason to think that misunderstanding is one of the principal springs of our division? Would there be anything criminal in both sides making pacific overtures? To censure one another, and never to use any conciliatory means, discovers a temper which we scruple not to assert does not imply one ingredient of that sacred benevolence which eminently marks the character of the followers of Jesus.

Such are the sentiments of your brethren in America, and we have acted agreeably to them. Persuaded that our division is scandalous in itself, and that we would injure the cause of God, and make ourselves ridiculous to mankind, should we wrangle about things which are foreign to Americans, and which they may be ignorant of, without incurring the Divine displeasure ; we received into communion the Burgess brethren who held the same religious principles with ourselves, and who were disposed, in connexion with us, to prosecute the testimony in a suitableness to our circumstances in this part of the world. It is but a poor salvo to allege, that though we had not any "call at our own hand to introduce a debate about the Burgess oath, yet it was our duty to stand to our principles (*i.e.* to carry on the controversy about that oath), when through the keenness of those who oppose a testimony for the covenanted reformation in Scotland, some were sent over to *raise a debate*." It did not appear to us that they were sent over to *raise a debate*. For, excepting a few strong expressions used by one of them, which, upon reflection, he would not justify, they were so far from discovering any signs of a litigious temper, that they earnestly desired peace, without so much as attempting to draw us over to their *party*. We could never find that either publicly or privately they endeavoured to raise prejudices in the minds of people against us, which, had they been inclined, they might have easily effected, as numbers of our people were once in communion with their side, and are yet, though without disaffection to us, attached to it. In a word, they discovered a benevolent temper, and a sincere regard for us. As we found them disposed for peace, we thought it was our duty to pursue it. Their coming over was very seasonable. As our own Synod would not send us any assistance, it was a favourable providence that they were sent to lend us a helping hand in preaching the glorious Gospel to perishing men. We do not yet see any cause to regret the *material* parts of our conduct. The strong assertions in your letter are far from convincing us that we have violated any Divine law in uniting with our brethren; though it may be (pardon the expression), we have transgressed some law of our Synod.

As to the manner of our proceeding, we readily own that we have not been very scrupulous about the punctilios of church policy, according to which we ought to have written to the Synod before we had concluded the agreement, and transmitted early advice of our transactions after it was concluded. Whatever reasons we then had for neglecting these formalities, we shall not now excuse ourselves, as we do not choose to be stiff with respect to the immaterial parts of our conduct.

To account for the apparent inconsistency in some of our letters, let it be considered that the agreement with Messrs. Telfair and Kinlock, at *Neshamina*, was only extrajudicial, though it was inadvertently subscribed by the Moderator, and did not become judicial till some months after, at a meeting of Presbytery at *Pequea*. On this head we own it was an oversight not to coalesce with these two brethren on the same footing as with Mr. Clark, though the terms are materially the same.

You tacitly charge us with presumption in meddling with a business that in no way belonged to us. On this we put the query, By what Divine statute is the healing of the wounds of

Zion *appropriated* to the Associate Synod? It is admitted the Synod should have begun the good work; it would have been their honour to have done it; but since they not only neglected their duty, but seemed to be resolved never to set about it, we cannot be justly blamed for doing what was in our power, and what we apprehend, the Lord was calling us to essay in this part of the world. Permit us to observe, that Reformation seldom, if ever, originated in the higher judicatories of a church that had been active in defection. Inferior judicatories, or particular ministers, encouraged by the concurrence of the *much despised people,* have been the instrument in the hand of God in beginning the most glorious Reformations the Church was ever blessed with. Had the first ministers of the secession been governed by your rule, it is likely there would not have been such a thing as *our* secession to this day. On the principle implied in your reasoning, or rather your magisterial assertion, the Church could not have been reformed, either from Popery or Prelacy; nay, a Reformation cannot be expected while the world stands. Whatever oversights we may be chargeable with, that may be construed by some as evidences of our despising the Synod, we still profess to have a warm regard for the Synod, though we must beg leave to tell you plainly, that we are not disposed to resign our reason and conscience by attending so stupidly to Synodical motions as your manner of writing implies we should.

But this is the most grievous charge; "We have given up the cause of God, nay, the whole testimony, to the *opposers thereof.*" Alarming libel, indeed! Such an imputation should be supported by the most triumphant evidence. It is an imputation pregnant with the utmost uncharitableness in respect both of our brethren and us. We doubt not, we have always been convinced, that the dissenting brethren greatly disserved the cause of God by their scandalously fervid contendings for the Burgess oath, as we, in our turn, have done it a very great injury by our scandalously fierce and solemn proceedings against them, without taking one *affectionate* step to convince them of their mistake; but that, on this account, they deserve to be called *the opposers of the cause of God,* without any qualification, we have not yet the assurance to say with you. Shall we think that you are really convinced that these brethren, who, as far as we know, are agreed with us in every principle relative to doctrine, worship, and government, and who give as good evidence of their having the fear of God in their hearts as we do, merit the severity of being branded with the blackest character? If men are thus to be characterized, merely because they have said or done something that is supposed to be, in some respects, opposite to the cause of God, we do not know that there is a set of men upon earth who ought not to be placed in the same category with the opposers of it. In our opinion, yourselves are in various respects obnoxious to the same character, as we doubt not you have had an active hand in some things that are injurious to His cause; and it would be but a just retaliation to brand you with it. Perhaps we should not stretch the point though we should allége that you *as really* oppose the cause of God, in labouring to prevent a reconciliation, as these brethren can be supposed to have done in taking defence of the condemned oaths. Though you have not given us any characteristical epithet, it is easy to see what kind of men we are in your esteem. Our dissenting brethren are the opposers of the cause of God. We have given up the cause of God to them. What follows? We are the guilty, the treacherous betrayers of it. Can you reflect on such an uncharitable insinuation, which does so great injury to the characters of your brethren, without feeling the most regretting sensations? We are resolved in the strength of grace, to adhere to our confession of faith, catechisms, directory, for worship, and form of presbyterial government—to prosecute the testimony as far as our circumstances require, and to cherish a sense of the obligation of our covenant, and to endeavour to have a conversation in the world corresponding with our profession. Notwithstanding, it seems we are the betrayers of the Lord's cause, because we have laid aside an angry controversy, the continuation of which, we apprehend, is inconsistent with a faithful obedience to the commands of Jesus. Tell it not in Gath!

It is likely you, in your turn, will reckon us very uncharitable in supposing that you have not a tender concern for the peace of Zion, since you expressly declare that "*you are desirous of peace founded upon truth.*" We shall be very sorry if we have inadvertently alleged anything that may be construed as an injury to your characters, without sufficient grounds; but as yet we cannot help thinking that you are neither consulting peace nor truth, in opposing the pacific measures we have taken in America. You say, you are desirous of peace, founded upon truth. This is, to be sure, a very good disposition. But we see some grounds to suspect that what you call a *peace founded upon truth,* implies something very opposite to a scriptural peace. We suppose you mean that you desire to be at peace with your brethren on condition they will come as penitent supplicants to the bar of your Synod, and own they have given up the whole testimony, and were justly delivered to Satan. If we have misapprehended your meaning, be pleased to correct us. Permit us to tell you, that this is a very *imperious* method of seeking *peace.* Our brethren are men of reason and understanding, and it cannot be reasonably expected that they will make such acknowledgments without conviction, or merely because it is the opinion of our Synod that they should make them. If the state of our affairs is impartially considered, it will be found that there is perhaps little less reason, on our side, for penitential acknowledgments than on theirs. Mutual condescension is absolutely necessary to compose *such* differences as have torn the secession to pieces, and the Lord requires it as indispensable duty. As there is ground to fear that both sides have greatly offended God, it would bear a more Christian appearance to *confess their faults to one another,* than for the one party to insist that the other should humiliate themselves at their feet, while they themselves are not disposed to make the smallest concession.

We are also charged with *violating our ordination vows, giving up with the constitution of the Synod, and reversing the sentences thereof.* As these are critical points, the discussing of which at this time might widen the difference between the Synod and us, we desire to be excused from writing our thoughts upon them. If the Synod shall think it proper to prosecute us for our conduct, we will be obliged to explain ourselves for our own vindication. But if the controversy with us is laid aside, there will be no necessity for our doing it ; and we hope the Synod will not require it, as the consequences may be very disagreeable to us all.

No doubt many have suspected that we *intend to break off from the Synod.* No suspicion can be more ungrounded, nothing is more remote from our thoughts. We are resolved to continue under our connexions with the Synod, as long as we are permitted ; and if we shall be thrown off, it is our intention to remain in an unconnected state, till we see what God will do. Though we have expressed our minds in terms that may be thought undutifully strong, yet we trust we are not obstinate. We lie open to conviction.

Meanwhile we cannot help being surprised at the Synod's refusing to send over some assistants. Though it were granted that we have departed from our duty, is it reasonable that the destitute vacancies should be punished for our faults? Missionaries may be sent under any restrictions the Synod shall think proper. If they are able and faithful preachers of the Gospel, we will be very glad of their officiating in our vacancies, though they should not approve of our union with the Burgess brethren; provided they behave themselves peaceably. However weighty your reasons for not sending some may appear to you, we doubt not that others will be tempted to put this construction on your conduct, that the perpetuating the controversy about the Burgess oath lies nearer your hearts than the salvation of souls in America. It is really astonishing that you will suffer multitudes to perish for lack of knowledge, rather than run the risk of two or three Missionaries approving our union. We think you would act more in character, if you were forward to send men to publish the glad tidings of salvation, even though upon their arrival here they should join with our Synod, and go over entirely to the opposite party. We wish this matter may be more seriously considered by you, for your refusal makes you obnoxious to great and deserved reproach. Should the Synod think it proper to favour us with any assistance, we earnestly desire that none may be sent but persons of some considerable abilities, and who have a free elocution. Inattention to this will be a great injury to the Secession in America.

That the Lord may return to Zion and revive his work in the midst of the years, by pouring out his spirit of grace and supplication, of love and a sound mind, is the earnest prayer of

Reverend Sirs,

Your affectionate brother and humble servant,

J. MASON.

To the Rev. Messrs. WILLIAM MONCRIEFF and JOHN [illegible].

APPENDIX B.

DR. McJIMSEY TO REV. EBENEZER MASON.

Montgomery, July 29th, 1830.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—Yours of July 12th, containing a prospectus in relation to the publishing of sermons and essays, &c., of your father, the late Rev. Dr. Mason, and also requesting me to furnish any materials in my possession, which might be of use, in preparing a memoir of his character and life, is now before me.

It affords me great pleasure that the publication of any of your father's productions is contemplated, and I heartily wish that you may meet with great encouragement in the attempt, not only on account of the great regard I cherish for the memory of my deceased friend, but because I am persuaded it will subserve the interests of Gospel truth and genuine piety.

In relation to materials in my possession, which might be of importance in preparing a memoir of his life, they are not extensive, in regard to such as are written; but they will be cheerfully furnished. They consist of letters written in the warmth of personal friendship on particular occasions. The correspondence commenced in 1797, soon after my settlement at Neely Town, in effecting which he was chiefly instrumental, and was continued occasionally until the year 1816. During all that period, and even to the close of his earthly course, the most intimate and undiminished friendship subsisted between us, as his letters will abundantly show. Some of them give his views in relation to the Calvinistic System of Theology; others, the importance he attached to the Theological School established in the Associate Reformed Church, which, it will be admitted by all, he was chiefly instrumental in founding, and in raising to such a high degree of celebrity. Few men could have effected more, if so much, with the limited means furnished for its support. Some of the letters above referred to show his own Christian exercises under afflictive dispensations; others administer advice and consolation to the afflicted, showing the importance of faith or trust in God, in the life of a Christian, particularly in a season of need, and as it respects the supply of our temporal necessities. His remarks on the latter point I deem peculiarly excellent; and I know they were a source of comfort to myself. I need not make extracts from them. I leave this to his biographer; and I have no doubt he will agree with me in these views, on a perusal of the letters. The letters, therefore, with a brief endorsement on them as to their contents, are forwarded to you, to make such use of them as may be deemed proper, on condition of their being returned to me, when the memoir of my highly-esteemed friend and brother is completed. It may not be improper to add, that I know much personally of the excellence and worth of the character of the late Dr. Mason from my long acquaintance with him, and our friendly and intimate personal intercourse for a long series of years. His literature, particularly his classical attainments—his correct taste on all subjects, his uncommon powers for Biblical exposition and criticism, and the high order of his eloquence, are known to all; and there can be no lack of proof on these points. But I leave these high gifts and attainments of our deceased friend to be expatiated on by some abler hands. What I have to say relates more immediately to the private worth and excellence of his character. My residence in his family on various occasions, and for weeks together, when I visited New-York, while attending meetings of Presbytery and Synod, gave me a full opportunity of witnessing the excellence of his private character as a Christian and a minister. Gentlemanly in his manners towards all with whom he had intercourse, his treatment of his friends was kind and affable and hospitable in an uncommon degree. In his whole soul and feelings, he was above anything mean or ungenerous.

One prominent trait in his character was his uncommon caution in calling in question the purity of men's motives in relation to their actions and measures. While he spoke his mind freely in private and in public as to the tendency and results of measures political and ecclesiastical which he disapproved, he rarely if ever imputed unworthy motives to the authors or supporters of those measures. More than once, I have heard him express his abhorrence of the practice of *going a motive hunting*. There were those who charged him with being haughty and overbearing in his manner; but it was without any just foundation. It was because they were unacquainted with the character of the man. In his social intercourse he was gentle and polite, and condescending in his manners in an uncommon degree towards those with whom he mingled. Possessed of great colloquial powers, he generally took a prominent part in the conversation of the social circle; but it was all easy and natural. There was no apparent effort to shine in this respect, to the mortification or injury of any present. Instead, therefore, of giving any umbrage, it was the delight of the company. And sprightly as he was in conversation, and witty in his remarks, he never treated a serious subject with unbecoming levity. He was always disgusted with such irreverent incongruity. . . . . His domestic and family arrangements, it often struck me, were of the most perfect kind—regularity, and order, and subordination, and happiness, appeared to pervade the whole household. In his family devotions, he was regular and devout and tender as became a christian parent and a man of God. No man or minister could be more attentive in imparting religious instruction to his children and domestics. Every morning, it was his uniform practice, when the family were convened for family worship, which was immediately before taking breakfast, to catechise his children and domestics on some portion of religious truth, previously assigned, requiring the repetition of appropriate texts of Scripture in support of the doctrine or duty taught or inculcated. It was not his practice, either in his public or private instructions, to hold forth the opinions and authority of men, as the ground of faith or the rule of duty. Although he was no enemy to formularies of sound doctrine, as a means of instruction to youth, and a bond of union in a christian church, he uniformly referred to the oracles of God, contained in the Sacred Scriptures, as the only authority which could bind the consciences of men. And I have no reason to suppose or believe, that his views in relation to a single article of Evangelical truth, of which he was such an able and eloquent champion, both from the pulpit and the press, and in Ecclesiastical Judicatories, were shaken or altered, in the smallest degree, until the day of his death. In a conversation with him a year or two before his decease, the name of Calvin having been mentioned, by which one of his grandchildren is called, it was remarked, that many men of the modern day found fault with Calvin's views of religious truth; when his countenance brightening, he promptly replied, "That nothing displeased him more than to hear the moderns find fault with Calvin's views, who, were he alive, would twist them around his finger." And in my last interview with him, although much debilitated in body by disease, he declared *that Christ was the sinner's only hope:* and on inquiring whether the great and precious truths of the Gospel, which he had preached to others, were not now his support and consolation? his reply was: "Indeed I think they are," and thus we parted. The interview was short, as it was with difficulty he gave distinct utterance to his sentiments and feelings. But it afforded me renewed occasion of gratitude and praise to God; as it fully satisfied me, that his views of evangelical truth remained unchanged to the end, and were the ground of his hope and the source of his comfort, in the views of death and the eternal world.

Much might be said of the ability and wisdom which Dr. Mason uniformly displayed in a deliberative and judicial body of men. Having been a co-presbyter of his for many years, and often a delegate along with him at the meetings of the General Synod, I had frequent opportunities of witnessing his uncommon skill in the transaction of judicial business. Cases the most perplexing and embarassing, he unravelled with apparent ease, and concentrated and united jarring views and opinions with admirable address, and that without any sacrifice of principle or duty. His grand maxim in the decision of judicial cases, was: "Do our duty, and leave consequences to the management of God."

He took a leading and active agency in all the prominent and most important measures of the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Church for many years; and I know that some of the most important judicial acts and testimonies published by the Synod, in regard to particular doctrines, particularly on justification, were drawn up by his pen, and in my judgment, merit a place among his able productions on theological subjects.

But I have extended my remarks beyond the limits I intended. If these hasty remarks be of any service in preparing a memoir of my highly valued friend and brother in the ministry, his biographer can make what use of them he may judge proper. Had I more time and leisure, much more might be added. You can, at any time, apply to me by letter for any information I may be in possession of, in relation to the character and history of your father, and it shall be willingly given. But in my judgment, time must be taken to prepare a proper memoir of my highly valued friend, such as his character and memory merit, and may meet public expectation. In such a work, very important materials may be obtained from his friends and correspondents in Europe. I have only to add my ardent prayer that complete success may crown your proposed undertaking, and that it may be blessed for furthering the cause of truth and religion, and of recommending them to the generation following. My affectionate regard to your widowed mother, and all the members of the highly esteemed family of my deceased friend, for whose spiritual welfare he manifested such a deep solicitude, and offered up so many fervent prayers at the mercy seat.

Your own and your father's friend,

JOHN McJIMSEY.

To the Rev. Ebenezer Mason, New York.

JL